Ella R. Metsker

From Mother.

Xmas, 1899.

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Under the Deodars

and

The Story of the Gadsbys

By

Rudyard Kipling.

Chicago and New York:
Rand, McNally & Company,
Publishers.

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UNDER THE DEODARS.

THE EDUCATION OF OTIS YEERE.

I.

SHOWING HOW THE GREAT IDEA WAS BORN.

> In the pleasant orchard-closes
> "God bless all our gains," say we;
> But "May God bless all our losses,"
> Better suits with our degree.
>
> *The Lost Bower.*

This is the history of a Failure; but the woman who failed said it might be an instructive tale to put into print for the benefit of the younger generation. The younger generation does not want instruction. It is perfectly willing to instruct if any one will listen to it. None the less, here begins the story where every right-minded story should begin—that is to say, at Simla, where all things begin and may come to an evil end.

The mistake was due to a very clever woman making a blunder and not retrieving it. Men are licensed to stumble, but a clever woman's mistake is outside the regular course of Nature and Providence; since all good people know that a woman is the only infallible thing in this world, except Government paper of the '79 issue, bearing

interest at four and a half per cent. Yet, we have to remember that six consecutive days of rehearsing the star-part of "The Fallen Angel," at the New Gaiety Theater, where the plaster is not yet properly dry, might have brought about an unhingement of spirits, which, again, might have led to eccentricities.

Mrs. Hauksbee came to "The Foundry" to tiffin with Mrs. Mallowe, her one bosom friend, for she was in no sense "a woman's woman." And it was a woman's tiffin, the door shut to all the world; and they both talked chiffons, which is French for Mysteries.

"I've enjoyed an interval of sanity," Mrs. Hauksbee announced, after tiffin was over and the two were comfortably settled in the little writing-room that opened out of Mrs. Mallowe's bedroom.

"My dear girl, what has *he* done?" said Mrs. Mallowe, sweetly. It is noticeable that ladies of a certain age call each other "dear girl," just as commissioners of twenty-eight years' standing address their equals in the Civil List as "my boy."

"There's no *he* in the case. Who am I that an imaginary man should be always credited to me? Am I an Apache?"

"No, dear; but somebody's scalp is generally drying at your wigwam door. Soaking, rather."

This was an allusion to the Hawley Boy, who was in the habit of riding all across Simla in the Rains, to call on Mrs. Hauksbee. That lady laughed.

"For my sins, the Aide at Tyrconnel last night told me off to The Mussuck. Hush! Don't laugh. One of my most devoted admirers. When duff came in—some one

really ought to teach them to make puddings at Tyrconnel—The Mussuck was at liberty to attend to me."

"Sweet soul! I know his appetite," said Mrs. Mallowe. "Did he, oh, *did* he, begin his wooing?"

"By a special mercy of Providence, *no*. He explained his importance as a Pillar of the Empire. I didn't laugh."

"Lucy, I don't believe you."

"Ask Captain Sangar; he was on the other side. Well, as I was saying, The Mussuck dilated."

"I think I can see him doing it," said Mrs. Mallowe, pensively, scratching her fox-terrier's ears.

"I was properly impressed. Most properly. I yawned openly. 'Strict supervision, and play them off one against the other,' said The Mussuck, shoveling down his ice by tureenfuls, I assure you. '*That*, Mrs. Hauksbee, is the secret of our Government.' "

Mrs. Mallowe laughed long and merrily. "And what did *you* say?"

"Did you ever know me at a loss for an answer yet? I said: 'So I have observed in my dealings with you.' The Mussuck swelled with pride. He is coming to call on me to-morrow. The Hawley Boy is coming, too."

" 'Strict supervision, and play them off one against the other. *That*, Mrs. Hauksbee, is the secret of *our* Government.' And I dare say if we could get to The Mussuck's heart we should find that he considers himself a man of the world."

"As he is on the other two things. I like The Mussuck, and I won't have you call him names. He amuses me."

"He has reformed you, too, by what appears. Explain the interval of sanity, and hit Tim on the nose with the

paper-cutter, please. That dog is too fond of sugar. Do you take milk in yours?"

"No, thanks. Polly, I'm wearied of this life. It's hollow."

"Turn religious, then. I always said that Rome would be your fate."

"Only exchanging half a dozen *attaches* in red for one in black, and if I fasted, the wrinkles would come, and never, *never* go. Has it ever struck you, dear, that I'm getting old?"

"Thanks for your courtesy. I'll return it. Ye-es, we are both not exactly—how shall I put it?"

"What we have been. 'I feel it in my bones,' as Mrs. Crossley says. Polly, I've wasted my life."

"As how?"

"Never mind how. I feel it. I want to be a Power before I die."

"*Be* a Power, then. You've wits enough for anything . . . and beauty?"

Mrs. Hauksbee pointed a teaspoon straight at her hostess. "Polly, if you heap compliments on me like this, I shall cease to believe that you're a woman. Tell me how I am to be a Power."

"Inform The Mussuck that he is the most fascinating and slimmest man in Asia, and he'll tell you anything and everything you please."

"Bother The Mussuck! I mean an *intellectual* Power—not a *gas* power. Polly, I'm going to start a salon."

Mrs. Mallowe turned lazily on the sofa and rested her head on her hand. "Hear the words of the Preacher, the son of Baruch."

"*Will* you talk sensibly?"

"I will, dear, for I see that you are going to make a mistake."

"I never made a mistake in my life—at least, never one that I couldn't explain away afterward."

"Going to make a mistake," went on Mrs. Mallowe, composedly. "It is impossible to start a salon in Simla. A *bar* would be much more to the point."

"Perhaps; but why? It seems so easy."

"Just what makes it so difficult. How many clever women are there in Simla?"

"Myself and yourself," said Mrs. Hauksbee, without a moment's hesitation.

"Modest woman! Mrs. Feardon would thank you for that. And how many clever men?"

"Oh—er—hundreds," said Mrs. Hauksbee, vaguely.

"What a fatal blunder! Not *one*. They are all bespoke by the Government. Take my husband, for instance. Jack *was* a clever man, though I say so who shouldn't. Government has eaten him up. All his ideas and powers of conversation—he really used to be a good talker, even to his wife, in the old days—are taken from him by this—this kitchen-sink of a Government. That's the case with every man up here who is at work. I don't suppose a Russian convict under the knout is able to amuse the rest of his gang; and all our men-folk here are gilded convicts."

"But there are scores——"

"I know what you're going to say. Scores of idle men upon leave. I admit it, but they are all of two objectionable sets. The Civilian who'd be delightful if he had the

military man's knowledge of the world and style, and the military man who'd be adorable if he had the Civilian's culture."

"Detestable word! *Have* Civilian's culchaw? I never studied the breed deeply."

"Don't make fun of Jack's service. Yes. They're like the teapoys in the Lakka Bazaar—good material, but not polished. They can't help themselves, poor dears. A Civilian only *begins* to be tolerable after he has knocked about the world for fifteen years."

"And a military man?"

"When he has the same amount of service. The young of both species are *horrible*. You would have scores of them in your salon."

"I would *not!*" said Mrs. Hauksbee, fiercely. "I would tell the bearer to darwaza band them. I'd put their own colonels and commissioners at the door to turn them away. I'd give them to the Topsham girl to play with."

"The Topsham girl would be grateful for the gift. But to go back to the salon. Allowing that you had gathered all your men and women together, what would you do with them? Make them talk? They would all with one accord begin to flirt. Your salon would become a glorified Peliti's—a 'Scandal Point' by lamplight."

"There's a certain amount of wisdom in that view."

"There's all the wisdom in the world in it. Surely, twelve Simla seasons ought to have taught you that you can't focus *anything* in India; and a salon, to be any good at all, *must* be permanent. In two seasons your roomful would be scattered all over Asia. We are only little bits of dirt on the hillsides—here one day, and blown down

the khud the next. We have lost the art of talking—at least our men have. We have no cohesion——"

"George Eliot in the flesh," interpolated Mrs. Hauksbee, wickedly.

"And collectively, my dear scoffer, we, men and women alike, have *no* influence. Come into the veranda and look at the Mall."

The two looked down on the now rapidly filling road, for all Simla was abroad to steal a stroll between a shower and a fog.

"How do you propose to fix that river? Look! There's The Mussuck—head of goodness knows what. He is a power in the land, though he *does* eat like a costermonger. There's Colonel Blone, and General Grucher, and Sir Dugald Delane, and Sir Henry Haughton, and Mr. Jellalatty. All Heads of Departments, and all powerful."

"And all my fervent admirers," said Mrs. Hauksbee, piously. "Sir Henry Haughton raves about me. But go on."

"One by one, these men are worth something. Collectively, they're just a mob of Anglo-Indians. Who cares for what Anglo-Indians say? Your salon won't weld the Departments together and make you mistress of India, dear. And these creatures won't talk administrative 'shop' in a crowd—your salon—because they are so afraid of the men in the lower ranks overhearing it. They have forgotten what of Literature and Art they ever knew, and women——"

"Can't talk about anything except the last Gymkhana,

or the sins of the last dhai. I was calling on Mrs. Derwills this morning."

"You admit that? They can talk to the subalterns, though, and the subalterns can talk to them. Your salon would suit their views admirably, if you respected the religious prejudices of the country and provided plenty of kala juggahs."

"Plenty of kala juggahs. Oh, my poor little idea! Kala juggahs in a salon! But who made *you* so awfully clever?"

"Perhaps I've tried myself; or perhaps I know a woman who has. I have preached and expounded the whole matter, and the conclusion thereof——"

"You needn't go on. 'Is Vanity.' Polly, I thank you. These vermin"—Mrs. Hauksbee waved her hand from the veranda to two men in the crowd below who had waved their hats to her—"these vermin shall not rejoice in a new Scandal Point or an extra Peliti's. I will abandon the notion of a salon. It *did* seem so tempting, though. But what shall I do? I must do something."

"Why? Are not Albana and Pharpar——"

"Jack has made you nearly as bad as himself! I want to, of course. I'm tired of everything and everybody, from a moonlight picnic at Seepee, to the blandishments of The Mussuck."

"Yes—that comes, too, sooner or later. Have you nerve enough to make your bow yet?"

Mrs. Hauksbee's mouth shut grimly. Then she laughed. "I think I see myself doing it. Big pink placards on the Mall: 'Mrs. Hauksbee! Positively her last appearance on *any* stage! This is to give notice!' No

more dances; no more rides or luncheons; no more theatricals with supper to follow; no more sparring with one's dearest, dearest friend; no more fencing with an inconvenient man who hasn't wit enough to clothe what he's pleased to call his sentiments in passable speech; no more parading of The Mussuck while Mrs. Tarkass calls all round Simla, spreading horrible stories about me! No more of anything that is thoroughly wearying, abominable and detestable, but, all the same, makes life worth the having. Yes! I see it all! Don't interrupt, Polly, I'm inspired. A mauve and white striped 'cloud' round my venerable shoulders, a seat in the fifth row of the Gaiety, and *both* horses sold. Delightful vision! A comfortable arm-chair, situated in three different draughts, at every ball-room; and nice, large, sensible shoes for all the couples to stumble over as they go into the veranda! Then at supper. Can't you imagine the scene? The greedy mob gone away. Reluctant subaltern, pink all over like a newly powdered baby—they really ought to *tan* subalterns before they are exported—Polly—sent back by the hostess to do his duty. Slouches up to me across the room, tugging at a glove two sizes too large for him—I *hate* a man who wears gloves like overcoats—and trying to look as if he'd thought of it from the first. 'May I ah have the pleasure 'f takin' you 'nt' supper?' Then I get up with a hungry smile. Just like this."

"Lucy, how *can* you be so absurd?"

"And sweep out on his arm. So! After supper I shall go away early, you know, because I shall be afraid of catching cold. No one will look for my 'rickshaw. *Mine*, so please you! I shall stand, always with that mauve and

white 'cloud' over my head, while the wet soaks into my dear, old, venerable feet and Tom swears and shouts for the memsahib's gharri. Then home to bed at half-past eleven! Truly excellent life—helped out by the visits of the Padri, just fresh from burying somebody down below there." She pointed through the pines, toward the cemetery, and continued with vigorous dramatic gesture:

"Listen! I see it all—down, down even to the stays! *Such* stays! Six-eight a pair, Polly, with red flannel—or list, is it?—that they put into the tops of those fearful things. I can draw you a picture of them."

"Lucy, for Heaven's sake, don't go waving your arms about in that idiotic manner! Recollect, every one can see you from the Mall."

"Let them see! They'll think I am rehearsing for 'The Fallen Angel.' Look! There's The Mussuck. How badly he rides. There!"

She blew a kiss to the venerable Indian administrator with infinite grace.

"Now," she continued, "he'll be chaffed about that at the Club in the delicate manner those brutes of men affect, and the Hawley Boy will tell me all about it—softening the details for fear of shocking me. That boy is too good to live, Polly. I've serious thoughts of recommending him to throw up his commission and go into the Church. In his present frame of mind he would obey me. Happy, happy child!"

"Never again," said Mrs. Mallowe, with an affectation of indignation, "shall you tiffin here! 'Lucindy, your behavior is scand'lus.' "

"All your fault," retorted Mrs. Hauksbee, "for sug-

gesting such a thing as my abdication. No! *Jamais*—Nevaire! I will act, dance, ride, frivol, talk scandal, dine out, and appropriate the legitimate captives of any woman I choose, until I d-r-r-rop, or a better woman than I puts me to shame before all Simla . . . and it's dust and ashes in my mouth while I'm doing it!"

She dashed into the drawing-room. Mrs. Mallowe followed and put an arm around her waist.

"I'm *not!*" said Mrs. Hauksbee, defiantly, rummaging in the bosom of her dress for her handkerchief. "I've been dining out for the last ten nights and rehearsing in the afternoon. You'd be tired yourself. It's only because I'm tired."

Mrs. Mallowe did not at once overwhelm Mrs. Hauksbee with spoken pity or ask her to lie down. She knew her friend too well. Handing her another cup of tea, she went on with the conversation.

"I've been through that, too, dear," she said.

"I remember," said Mrs. Hauksbee, a gleam of fun on her face. "In '84, wasn't it? You went out a great deal less next season."

Mrs. Mallowe smiled in a superior and sphinx-like fashion.

"I became an Influence," said she.

"Good gracious, child, you didn't join the Theosophists and kiss Buddha's big toe, did you? I tried to get into their set once, but they cast me out for a skeptic—without a chance of improving my poor little mind, too."

"No, I didn't Theosophilander. Jack says — "

"Never mind Jack. What a husband says is not of the least importance. What did you do?"

"I made a lasting impression."

"So have I—for four months. But that didn't console me in the least. I hated the man. *Will* you stop smiling in that inscrutable way and tell me what you mean?"

Mrs. Mallowe told.

* * * * * * *

"And—you—mean—to—say that is absolutely Platonic on both sides?"

"Absolutely, or I should not have taken it up."

"And his last promotion was due to you?"

Mrs. Mallowe nodded.

"And you warned him against the Topsham girl?"

Another nod.

"And told him of Sir Dugald Delane's private Memo. about him?"

A third nod.

"*Why?*"

"What a question to ask a woman! Because it amused me at first. I am proud of my property now. If I live, he shall continue to be successful. Yes, I will put him upon the straight road to Knighthood, and everything else that a man values. The rest depends upon himself."

"Polly, you are a most extraordinary woman."

"Not in the least. I'm concentrated, that's all. You diffuse yourself, dear; and though all Simla knows your skill in handling a Team ----"

"Can't you choose a prettier word?"

"*Team*, of half a dozen, from The Mussuck to the Hawley Boy, you gain nothing by it. Not even amusement."

"And you?"

"Try my recipe. Take a man—not a boy, mind, but an almost mature, unattached man—and be his guide, philosopher, and friend. You'll find it *the* most interesting occupation that you ever embarked on. It can be done—you needn't look like that—because I've done it."

"There's an element of danger about it that makes the notion attractive. I'll get such a man and say to him: 'Now there must be *no* flirtation. Do exactly what I tell you, profit by my instruction and counsels, and all will yet be well,' as Toole says. Is that the idea?"

"More or less," said Mrs. Mallowe, with an unfathomable smile. "But be sure he understands that there must be no flirtation."

II.

SHOWING WHAT WAS BORN OF THE GREAT IDEA.

Dribble-dribble—trickle-trickle—
What a lot of raw dust!
My dollie's had an accident
And out came all the sawdust!

Nursery Rhyme.

So Mrs. Hauksbee, in "The Foundry" which overlooks Simla Mall, sat at the feet of Mrs. Mallowe and gathered wisdom. The end of the Conference was the Great Idea upon which Mrs. Hauksbee so plumed herself.

"I warn you," said Mrs. Mallowe, beginning to repent of her suggestion, "that the matter is not half so easy as it looks. Any woman—even the Topsham girl—can catch

a man, but very, *very* few know how to manage him when captured."

"My child," was the answer, "I've been a female St. Simon Stylites looking down upon men for these—these years past. Ask The Mussuck whether I can manage them."

Mrs. Hauksbee departed humming: "I'll go to him and say to him in manner most ironical." Mrs. Mallowe laughed to herself. Then she grew suddenly sober. "I wonder whether I've done well in advising that amusement? Lucy's a clever woman, but a *thought* too mischievous where a man is concerned."

A week later the two met at a Monday Pop. "Well?" said Mrs. Mallowe.

"I've caught him!" said Mrs. Hauksbee. Her eyes were dancing with merriment.

"Who is it, you mad woman? I'm sorry I ever spoke to you about it."

"Look between the pillars. In the third row; fourth from the end. You can see his face now. Look!"

"Otis Yeere! Of *all* the improbable people! I don't believe you."

"Hush! Wait till Mrs. Tarkass begins murdering Milton Wellings, and I'll tell you all about it. *S-s-ss!* There we are. That woman's voice always reminds me of an Underground train coming into Earl's Court with the brakes down. Now listen. It is *really* Otis Yeere."

"So I see, but it doesn't follow that he is your property."

"He *is!* By right of trove, as the barristers say. I

found him, lonely and unbefriended, the very next night after our talk, at the Dugald Delane's burrakhana. I liked his eyes, and I talked to him. Next day he called. Next day we went for a ride together, and to-day he's tied to my 'rickshaw wheels hand and foot. You'll see when the concert's over. He doesn't know I'm here yet."

"Thank goodness you haven't chosen a boy. What are you going to do with him, assuming that you've got him?"

"Assuming, indeed! Does a woman—do I—ever make a mistake in that sort of thing? First"—Mrs. Hauksbee ticked off the items ostentatiously on her daintily gloved fingers—"First, my dear, I shall *dress* him properly. At present his raiment is a disgrace, and he wears a dress shirt like a crumpled sheet of the 'Pioneer.' Secondly, after I have made him presentable, I shall form his *manners*—his morals are above reproach."

"You seem to have discovered a great deal about him, considering the shortness of your acquaintance."

"Surely *you* ought to know that the first proof a man gives of his interest in a woman is by talking to her about his own sweet self. If the woman listens without yawning, he begins to like her. If she flatters the animal's vanity, he ends by adoring her."

"In some cases."

"Never mind the exceptions. I know which one you are thinking of. Thirdly, and lastly, after he is polished and made pretty, I shall, as you said, be his guide, philosopher, and friend, and he shall become a success—as great a success as your friend. I always wondered how

that man got on. *Did* The Mussuck come to you with the Civil List, and, dropping on one knee—no, two knees, *a la Gibbon*—hand it to you and say: 'Adorable angel, choose your friend's appointment' ?"

"Lucy, your long experiences of the Military Department have demoralized you. One doesn't do that sort of thing on the Civil Side."

"No disrespect meant to 'Jack's Service,' my dear. I only asked for information. Give me three months, and see what changes I shall work in my prey."

"Go your own way since you must. But I'm sorry that I was weak enough to suggest the amusement."

"'I am all discretion, and may be trusted to an infinite extent,'" quoted Mrs. Hauksbee from "The Fallen Angel"; and the conversation ceased with Mrs. Tarkass' last long-drawn war-whoop.

Her bitterest enemies—and she had many—could hardly accuse Mrs. Hauksbee of wasting her time. Otis Yeere was one of those wandering "dumb" characters, foredoomed through life to be "nobody's property." Ten years in Her Majesty's Bengal Civil Service, spent, for the most part, in undesirable Districts, had dowered him with little to be proud of, and nothing to give confidence. Old enough to have lost the "first fine careless rapture" that showers on the immature 'Stunt imaginary Commissionerships and Stars, and sends him into the collar with coltish earnestness and abandon; too young to be yet able to look back upon the progress he had made, and thank Providence that under the conditions of to-day he had come even so far, he stood upon the "dead-center" of his career. And when a man stands still, he feels the slight-

est impulse from without. Fortune had ruled that Otis Yeere should be, for the first part of his service, one of the rank and file who are ground up in the wheels of the Administration, losing heart and soul, and mind and strength, in the process. Until steam replaces manual power in the working of the Empire, there must always be this percentage—must always be the men who are used up, expended, in the mere mechanical routine. For these promotion is far off, and the mill-grind of every day very near and instant. The Secretariats know them only by name; they are not the picked men of the Districts with the Divisions and Collectorates awaiting them. They are simply the rank and file—the food for fever—sharing with the ryot and the plow-bullock the honor of being the plinth on which the State rests. The older ones have lost their aspirations; the younger are putting theirs aside with a sigh. Both learn to endure patiently until the end of the day. Twelve years in the rank and file, men say, will sap the hearts of the bravest and dull the wits of the most keen.

Out of this life Otis Yeere had fled for a few months, drifting, for the sake of a little masculine society, into Simla. When his leave was over he would return to his swampy, sour-green, under-manned district, the native Assistant, the native Doctor, the native Magistrate, the steaming, sweltering Station, the ill kempt City, and the undisguised insolence of the Municipality that babbled away the lives of men. Life was cheap, however. The soil spawned humanity, as in bred frogs in the Rains, and the gap of the sickness of one season was filled to overflowing by the fecundity of the next. Otis was unique

edly thankful to lay down his work for a little while and escape from the seething, whining, weakly hive, impotent to help itself, but strong in its power to cripple, thwart, and annoy the weary-eyed man who, by official irony, was said to be "in charge" of it.

* * * * * * *

"I knew there were women-dowdies in Bengal. They come up here sometimes. But I didn't know that there were men-dowdies, too."

Then, for the first time, it occurred to Otis Yeere that his clothes were rather ancestral in appearance. It will be seen from the above that his friendship with Mrs. Hauksbee had made great strides.

As that lady truthfully says, a man is never so happy as when he is talking about himself. From Otis Yeere's lips Mrs. Hauksbee, before long, learned everything that she wished to know about the subject of her experiment; learned what manner of life he had led in what she vaguely called "those awful cholera districts"; learned, too, but this knowledge came later, what manner of life he had purposed to lead, and what dreams he had dreamed in the year of grace '77, before the reality had knocked the heart out of him. Very pleasant are the shady bridle-paths around Prospect Hill for the telling of confidences.

"Not yet," said Mrs. Hauksbee to Mrs. Mallowe. "Not yet. I must wait until the man is properly dressed, at least. Great heavens, is it possible that he doesn't know what an honor it is to be taken up by *Me!*"

Mrs. Hauksbee did not reckon false modesty as one of her failings.

"Always with Mrs. Hauksbee!" murmured Mrs. Mal-

lowe, with her sweetest smile, to Otis. "Oh, you men, you men! Here are our Punjabis growling because you've monopolized the nicest woman in Simla. They'll tear you to pieces on the Mall, some day, Mr. Yeere."

Mrs. Mallowe rattled down-hill, having satisfied herself, by a glance through the fringe of her sunshade, of the effect of her words.

The shot went home. Of a surety Otis Yeere was somebody in this bewildering whirl of Simla. Had monopolized the nicest woman in it, and the Punjabis were growling. The notion justified a mild glow of vanity. He had never regarded his acquaintance with Mrs. Hauksbee as a matter for general interest.

The knowledge of envy was a pleasant feeling to the man of no account. It was intensified later in the day when a luncher at the Club said, spitefully: "Well, for a debilitated Ditcher, Yeere, you *are* going it. Hasn't any kind friend told you that she's the most dangerous woman in Simla?"

Yeere chuckled and passed out. When, oh, when, would his new clothes be ready? He descended into the Mall to inquire; and Mrs. Hauksbee, coming over the Church Ridge in her 'rickshaw, looked down upon him approvingly. "He's learning to carry himself as if he were a man, instead of a piece of furniture, and"—she screwed up her eyes to see the better through the sunlight—"he *is* a man when he holds himself like that. Oh, blessed Conceit, what should we be without you?"

With the new clothes came a new stock of self confidence. Otis Yeere discovered that he could enter a room without breaking into a gentle perspiration, and could

cross one, even to talk to Mrs. Hauksbee, as though rooms were meant to be crossed. He was, for the first time in nine years, proud of himself, and contented with his life, satisfied with his new clothes, and rejoicing in the coveted friendship of Mrs. Hauksbee.

"Conceit is what the poor fellow wants," she said in confidence to Mrs. Mallowe. "I believe they must use Civilians to plow the fields with in Lower Bengal. You see, I have to begin from the very beginning—haven't I? But you'll admit, won't you, dear, that he is immensely improved since I took him in hand? Only give me a little more time and he won't know himself."

Indeed, Yeere was rapidly beginning to forget what he had been. One of his own rank and file put the matter in a nutshell when he asked Yeere, in reference to nothing: "And who has been making *you* a Member of Council lately? You carry the side of half a dozen of 'em."

"I—I'm awf'ly sorry. I didn't mean it, you know," said Yeere, apologetically.

"There'll be no holding you," continued the old stager, grimly. "Climb down, Otis—climb down, and get all that beastly affectation knocked out of you with fever! Three thousand a month wouldn't support it."

Yeere repeated the incident to Mrs. Hauksbee. He had insensibly come to look upon her as his Frau Confessorin.

"And you apologized!" she said. "Oh, shame! I *hate* a man who apologizes. Never apologize for what your friend called 'side.' *Never!* It's a man's *business* to be insolent and overbearing until he meets with a stronger. Now, you bad boy, listen to me."

Simply and straightforwardly, as the 'rickshaw loitered

round Jakko, Mrs. Hauksbee preached to Otis Yeere the Great Gospel of Conceit, illustrating it with living subjects encountered during their Sunday afternoon stroll.

"Good gracious!" she concluded with the personal argument, "you'll apologize next for being my *attache?*"

"Never!" said Otis Yeere. "That's another thing altogether. I shall always be——"

"What's coming?" thought Mrs. Hauksbee.

"Proud of that," said Otis.

"Safe for the present," she said to herself.

But I'm afraid I *have* grown conceited. Like Jeshurun, you know. When he waxed fat, then he kicked. It's the having no worry on one's mind and the Hill air, I suppose."

"Hill air, indeed!" said Mrs. Hauksbee to herself. "He'd have been hiding in the Club till the last day of his leave if I hadn't discovered him." Then aloud:

"Why shouldn't you be? You have every right to."

"I! Why?"

"Oh, hundreds of things. I'm not going to waste this lovely afternoon by explaining; but I *know* you have. What was that heap of manuscript you showed me about the grammar of the aboriginal—what's their names?"

"Gullals. A piece of nonsense. I've far too much work to do to bother over Gullals now. You should see my District. Come down with your husband some day and I'll show you round. Such a lovely place in the Rains! A sheet of water with the railway embankment and the snakes sticking out, and, in the summer, green flies and green squash. The people would die of fear if you shook a dog-whip at 'em. But they know you're forbidden to

do that, so they conspire to make your life a burden to you. My District's worked by some man at Darjiling, on the strength of a pleader's false reports. Oh, it's a heavenly place!"

Otis Yeere laughed bitterly.

"There's not the least necessity that you should stay in it. Why do you?"

"Because I must. How'm I to get out of it?"

"How! In a hundred and fifty ways. If there weren't so many people on the road, I'd like to box your ears. Ask, my dear sir, *ask!* Look! There is young Hexarly with six years' service and half your talents. He asked for what he wanted, and he got it. See, down by the Convent! There's McArthurson who has come to his present position by asking—sheer, downright asking—after he had pushed himself out of the rank and file. One man is as good as another in your service—believe me. I've seen Simla for more seasons than I care to think about. Do you suppose men are chosen for appointments because of their special fitness *beforehand?* You have all passed a high test—what do you call it?—in the beginning, and, excepting the three or four who have gone altogether to the bad, you can all work. Asking does the rest. Call it cheek, call it insolence, call it anything you like, but *ask!* Men argue—yes, I know what men say—that a man, by the mere audacity of his request, *must* have some good in him. A weak man doesn't say: 'Give me this and that.' He whines: 'Why haven't I been given this and that?' If you were in the Army I should say learn to spin plates or play a tambourine with your toes. As it is—*ask!* You belong to a Service that ought to be able to command the

Channel fleet, or set a leg at twenty minutes' notice, and *yet* you hesitate over asking to escape from the squashy green district where you *admit* you are not master. Drop the Bengal Government altogether. Even Darjiling is a little out-of-the-way hole. I was there once, and the rents were extortionate. Assert yourself. Get the Government of India to take you over. Try to get on the Frontier, where *every* man has a grand chance if he can trust himself. *Go* somewhere! *Do* something! You have twice the wits and three times the presence of the men up there, and—and"—Mrs. Hauksbee paused for breath; then continued—"and in *any* way you look at it, you *ought* to. *You* who could go so far!"

"I don't know," said Yeere, rather taken aback by the unexpected eloquence. "I haven't such a good opinion of myself."

It was not strictly Platonic, but it was Policy. Mrs. Hauksbee laid her hand lightly upon the ungloved paw that rested on the turned-back 'rickshaw hood, and, looking the man full in the face, said tenderly, almost too tenderly: "*I* believe in you if you mistrust yourself. Is that enough, my friend?"

"It is enough," answered Otis, very solemnly.

He was silent for a long time, redreaming the dreams that he had dreamed eight years ago, but through them all ran, as sheet-lightning through a golden cloud, the light of Mrs. Hauksbee's violet eyes.

Curious and impenetrable are the mazes of Simla life—the only existence in this desolate land worth the living. Gradually it went abroad among men and women, in the pauses between dance, play, and Gymkhana, that Otis

Yeere, the man with the newly lit light of self-confidence in his eyes, had "done something decent" in the wilds whence he came. He had brought an erring Municipality to reason, appropriated the funds on his own responsibility, and saved the lives of hundreds. He knew more about the Gullals than any living man. Had a vast knowledge of the aboriginal tribes; was, in spite of his juniority, the greatest authority on the aboriginal Gullals. No one quite knew who or what the Gullals were till The Mussuck, who had been calling on Mrs. Hauksbee, and prided himself upon picking people's brains, explained they were a tribe of ferocious hillmen, somewhere near Sikkim, whose friendship even the Great Indian Empire would find it worth her while to secure. Now we know that Otis Yeere had shown Mrs. Hauksbee his MS. notes of six years' standing on these same Gullals. He had told her, too, how, sick and shaken with the fever their negligence had bred, crippled by the loss of his pet clerk, and savagely angry at the desolation in his charge, he had once damned the collective eyes of his "intelligent local board" for a set of haramzadas. Which act of "brutal and tyrannous oppression" won him a Reprimand Royal from the Bengal Government; but in the anecdote as amended for Northern consumption we find no record of this. Hence we are forced to conclude that Mrs. Hauksbee "edited" his reminiscences before sowing them in idle ears, ready, as she well knew, to exaggerate good or evil. And Otis Yeere bore himself as befitted the hero of many tales.

"You can talk to *me* when you don't fall into a brown

study. Talk now, and talk your brightest and best," said Mrs. Hauksbee.

Otis needed no spur. Look to a man who has the counsel of a woman of or above the world to back him. So long as he keeps his head, he can meet both sexes on equal ground—an advantage never intended by Providence, who fashioned Man on one day and Woman on another, in sign that neither should know more than a very little of the other's life. Such a man goes far, or, the counsel being withdrawn, collapses suddenly while his world seeks the reason.

Generaled by Mrs. Hauksbee, who, again, had all Mrs. Mallowe's wisdom at her disposal, proud of himself, and, in the end, believing in himself because he was believed in, Otis Yeere stood ready for any fortune that might befall, certain that it would be good. He would fight for his own hand, and intended that this second struggle should lead to better issue than the first helpless surrender of the bewildered 'Stunt.

What might have happened, it is impossible to say. This lamentable thing befell, bred directly by a statement of Mrs. Hauksbee that she would spend the next season in Darjiling.

'Are you certain of that?" said Otis Yeere.

"Quite. We're writing about a house now."

Otis Yeere "stopped dead," as Mrs. Hauksbee put it in discussing the relapse with Mrs. Mallowe.

"He has behaved," she said, angrily, "just like Captain Kerrington's pony—only Otis is a donkey—at the last Gymkhana. Planted his fore feet and refused to go

another step. Polly, my man's going to disappoint me. What shall I do?"

As a rule, Mrs. Mallowe does not approve of staring, but on this occasion she opened her eyes to the utmost.

"You have managed cleverly so far," she said. "Speak to him, and ask him what he means."

"I will—at to-night's dance."

"No—o, not at a dance," said Mrs. Mallowe, cautiously. "Men are never themselves quite at dances. Better wait till to-morrow morning."

"Nonsense. If he's going to revert in this insane way, there isn't a day to lose. Are you going? No! Then sit up for me, there's a dear. I shan't stay longer than supper under any circumstances."

Mrs. Mallowe waited through the evening, looking long and earnestly into the fire, and sometimes smiling to herself.

* * * * * * *

"Oh! oh! oh! The man's an idiot! A raving, positive idiot! I'm sorry I ever saw him!"

Mrs. Hauksbee burst into Mrs. Mallowe's house, at midnight, almost in tears.

"What in the world has happened?" said Mrs. Mallowe, but her eyes showed that she had guessed an answer.

"Happened! Everything has happened! He was there. I went to him and said: 'Now, what does this nonsense mean?' Don't laugh, dear, I can't bear it. But you know what I mean I said. Then it was a square, and I sat it out with him and wanted an explanation, and *he* said—Oh! I haven't patience with such idiots! You

know what I said about going to Darjiling next year? It doesn't matter to me *where* I go. I'd have changed the Station and lost the rent to have saved this. He said, in so many words, that he wasn't going to try to work up any more, because—because he would be shifted into a province away from Darjiling, and his own District, where these creatures are, is within a day's journey——"

"Ah—hh!" said Mrs. Mallowe, in a tone of one who has successfully tracked an obscure word through a large dictionary.

"Did you ever *hear* of anything so mad—so absurd? And he had the ball at his feet. He had only to kick it! I would have made him *anything!* Anything in the wide world. He could have gone to the world's end. I would have helped him. I made him, didn't I, Polly? Didn't I *create* that man? Doesn't he owe everything to me? And to reward me, just when everything was nicely arranged, by this *lunacy* that spoiled everything!"

"Very few men understand devotion thoroughly."

"Oh, Polly, *don't* laugh at me! I give men up from this hour. I could have killed him then and there. What *right* had this man—this *Thing* I had picked out of his filthy paddy-fields—to make love to me?"

"He did that, did he?"

"He did. I don't remember half he said, I was so angry. Oh, but such a funny thing happened! I can't help laughing at it now, though I felt nearly ready to cry with rage. He raved, and I stormed—I'm afraid we must have made an awful noise in our kala juggah. Protect my character, dear, if it's all over Simla by to-morrow—and then he bobbed forward in the middle of his insanity

—I *firmly* believe the man's demented—and kissed me."

"Morals above reproach," purred Mrs. Mallowe.

"So they were—so they are! It was the most absurd kiss. I don't believe he'd ever kissed a woman in his life before. I threw my head back, and it was a sort of slidy, pecking dab, just on the end of the chin—here." Mrs. Hauksbee tapped her rather masculine chin with her fan. "Then, of course, I was *furiously* angry, and told him that he was no gentleman, and I was sorry I'd ever met him, and so on. He was crushed so easily that I couldn't be *very* angry. Then I came away straight to you."

"Was this before or after supper?"

"Oh! before—oceans before. Isn't it perfectly disgusting?"

"Let me think. I withhold judgment till to-morrow. Morning brings counsel."

But morning brought only a servant with a dainty bouquet of Annandale roses for Mrs. Hauksbee to wear at the dance at Viceregal Lodge that night.

"He doesn't seem to be *very* penitent," said Mrs. Mallowe. "What's the *billet-doux* in the center?"

Mrs. Hauksbee opened the neatly folded note—another accomplishment that she had taught Otis—read it, and groaned tragically.

"Last wreck of a feeble intellect! Poetry! Is it his own, do you think? Oh, that I ever built my hopes on such a maudlin idiot!"

"No. It's a quotation from Mrs. Browning, and, in view of the facts of the case, as Jack says, uncommonly well chosen. Listen:

" 'Sweet, thou hast trod on a heart—
Pass! There's a world full of men;
And women as fair as thou art
Must do such things now and then.

'Thou only hast stepped unaware—
Malice not one can impute;
And why should a heart have been there,
In the way of a fair woman's foot?' "

"I didn't—I didn't—I didn't!" said Mrs. Hauksbee, angrily, her eyes filling with tears; "there was no malice at all. Oh, it's *too* vexatious!"

"You've misunderstood the compliment," said Mrs. Mallowe. "He clears you completely, and—ahem!—I should think by this, that *he* has cleared completely, too. My experience of men is that when they begin to quote poetry, they are going to flit. Like swans singing before they die, you know."

"Polly, you take my sorrows in a most unfeeling way."

"Do I? Is it so terrible? If he's hurt your vanity, I should say that you've done a certain amount of damage to his heart."

"Oh, you can never tell about a *man!*" said Mrs. Hauksbee, with deep scorn.

* * * * * * *

Reviewing the matter as an impartial outsider, it strikes me that I'm about the only person who has profited by the education of Otis Yeere. It comes to twenty-seven pages and a bittock.

AT THE PIT'S MOUTH.

Men say it was a stolen tide—
  The Lord that sent it He knows all,
But in mine ear will aye abide
  The message that the bells let fall,
And awesome bells they were to me,
  That in the dark rang, "Enderby."

JEAN INGELOW.

Once upon a time there was a Man and his Wife and a Tertium Quid.

All three were unwise, but the Wife was the unwisest. The Man should have looked after his Wife, who should have avoided the Tertium Quid, who, again, should have married a wife of his own, after clean and open flirtations, to which nobody can possibly object, round Jakko or Observatory Hill. When you see a young man with his pony in a white lather, and his hat on the back of his head, flying down-hill at fifteen miles an hour to meet a girl who will be properly surprised to meet him, you naturally approve of that young man, and wish him Staff appointments, and take an interest in his welfare, and, as the proper time comes, give him sugar-tongs or side-saddles, according to your means and generosity.

The Tertium Quid flew down-hill on horseback, but it was to meet the Man's Wife; and when he flew up-hill it was for the same end. The Man was in the Plains, earn-

ing money for his Wife to spend on dresses and four-hundred-rupee bracelets, and inexpensive luxuries of that kind. He worked very hard, and sent her a letter or post-card daily. She also wrote to him daily, and said that she was longing for him to come up to Simla. The Tertium Quid used to lean over her shoulder and laugh as she wrote the notes. Then the two would ride to the post-office together.

Now, Simla is a strange place, and its customs are peculiar; nor is any man who has not spent at least ten seasons there qualified to pass judgment on circumstantial evidence, which is the most untrustworthy in the Courts. For these reasons, and for others which need not appear, I decline to state positively whether there was anything irretrievably wrong in the relations between the Man's Wife and the Tertium Quid. If there was, and hereon you must form your own opinion, it was the Man's Wife's fault. She was kittenish in her manners, wearing generally an air of soft and fluffy innocence. But she was deadly learned and evil-instructed; and, now and again, when the mask dropped, men saw this, shuddered, and—almost drew back. Men are occasionally particular, and the least particular men are always the most exacting.

Simla is eccentric in its fashion of treating friendships. Certain attachments which have set and crystallized through half a dozen seasons acquire almost the sanctity of the marriage bond, and are revered as such. Again, certain attachments equally old, and, to all appearance, equally venerable, never seem to win any recognized official status; while a chance-sprung acquaintance, not two months old, steps into the place which by right be-

longs to the senior. There is no law reducable to print which regulates these affairs.

Some people have a gift which secures them infinite toleration, and others have not. The Man's Wife had not. If she looked over the garden wall, for instance, women taxed her with stealing their husbands. She complained pathetically that she was not allowed to choose her friends. When she put up her big white muff to her lips, and gazed over it and under her eyebrows at you as she said this thing, you felt that she had been infamously misjudged, and that the other women's instincts were all wrong; which was absurd. She was not allowed to own the Tertium Quid in peace; and was so strangely constructed that she would not have enjoyed peace had she been so permitted. She preferred some semblance of intrigue to cloak even her most commonplace actions.

After two months of riding, first round Jakko, then Elysium, then Summer Hill, then Observatory Hill, then under Jutogh, and lastly up and down the Cart Road as far as the Tara Devi gap in the dusk, she said to the Tertium Quid: "Frank, people say we are too much together, and people are so horrid."

The Tertium Quid pulled his mustache, and replied that horrid people were unworthy of the consideration of nice people.

"But they have done more than talk—they have written—written to my hubby—I'm sure of it," said the Man's Wife; and she pulled a letter from her husband out of her saddle-pocket and gave it to the Tertium Quid.

It was an honest letter, written by an honest man, then

stewing in the Plains on two hundred rupees a month (for he allowed his wife eight hundred and fifty), and in a silk banian and cotton trousers. It said that, perhaps, she had not thought of the unwisdom of allowing her name to be so generally coupled with the Tertium Quid's; that she was too much of a child to understand the dangers of that sort of thing; that he, her husband, was the last man in the world to interfere jealously with her little amusements and interest, but that it would be better were she to drop the Tertium Quid quietly and for her husband's sake. The letter was sweetened with many pretty little pet names, and it amused the Tertium Quid considerably. He and She laughed over it, so that you, fifty yards away, could see their shoulders shaking while the horses slouched along side by side.

Their conversation was not worth reporting. The upshot of it was that, next day, no one saw the Man's Wife and the Tertium Quid together. They had gone down to the Cemetery, which, as a rule, is only visited officially by the inhabitants of Simla.

A Simla funeral with the clergyman riding, the mourners riding, and the coffin creaking as it swings between the bearers, is one of the most depressing things on this earth, particularly when the procession passes under the wet, dank dip beneath the Rockcliffe Hotel, where the sun is shut out, and all the hill streams are wailing and weeping together as they go down the valleys.

Occasionally, folk tend the graves; but we in India shift and are transferred so often that, at the end of the second year, the dead have no friends—only acquaint-

ances who are far too busy amusing themselves up the hill to attend to old partners. The idea of using a Cemetery as a rendezvous is distinctly a feminine one. A man would have said simply: "Let people talk. We'll go down the Mall." A woman is made differently, especially if she be such a woman as the Man's Wife. She and the Tertium Quid enjoyed each other's society among the graves of men and women that they had known and danced with aforetime.

They used to take a big horse-blanket and sit on the grass a little to the left of the lower end, where there is a dip in the ground, and where the occupied graves die out and the ready-made ones are not ready. Any self-respecting Indian Cemetery keeps half a dozen graves permanently open for contingencies and incidental wear and tear. In the Hills these are more usually baby's size, because children who come up weakened and sick from the Plains often succumb to the effects of the Rains in the Hills, or get pneumonia from their ayahs taking them through damp pine-woods after the sun has set. In Cantonments, of course, the man's size is more in request, these arrangements varying with the climate and population.

One day when the Man's Wife and the Tertium Quid had just arrived in the Cemetery, they saw some coolies breaking ground. They had marked out a full-sized grave, and the Tertium Quid asked them whether any Sahib was sick. They said that they did not know; but it was an order that they should dig a Sahib's grave.

"Work away," said the Tertium Quid, "and let's see how it's done."

The coolies worked away, and the Man's Wife and the Tertium Quid watched and talked for a couple of hours while the grave was being deepened. Then a coolie, taking the earth in baskets as it was thrown up, jumped over the grave.

"That's queer," said the Tertium Quid. "Where's my ulster?"

"What's queer?" said the Man's Wife.

"I have got a chill down my back—just as if a goose had walked over my grave."

"Why do you look at the horror, then?" said the Man's Wife. "Let us go."

The Tertium Quid stood at the head of the grave, and stared without answering for a space. Then he said, dropping a pebble down: "It is nasty—and cold; horribly cold. I don't think I shall come to the Cemetery any more. I don't think grave-digging is cheerful."

The two talked and agreed that the Cemetery was depressing. They also arranged for a ride next day out from the Cemetery through the Mashobra Tunnel up to Fagoo and back, because all the world was going to a garden-party at Viceregal Lodge, and all the people of Mashobra would go, too.

Coming up the Cemetery road, the Tertium Quid's horse tried to bolt up-hill, being tired with standing so long, and managed to strain a back sinew.

"I shall have to take the mare to-morrow," said the

Tertium Quid, "and she'll stand nothing heavier than a snaffle."

They made their arrangements to meet in the Cemetery, after allowing all the Mashobra people time to pass into Simla. That night it rained heavily, and next day, when the Tertium Quid came to the trysting-place, he saw that the new grave had a foot of water in it, the ground being a tough and sour clay.

"Jove! That looks beastly," said the Tertium Quid. "Fancy being boarded up and dropped into that well!"

They then started off to Fagoo, the mare playing with the snaffle and picking her way as though she were shod with satin, and the sun shining divinely. The road below Mashobra to Fagoo is officially styled the Himalayan-Thibet Road; but in spite of its name it is not much more than six feet wide in most places, and the drop into the valley below may be anything between one and two thousand feet.

"Now we're going to Thibet," said the Man's Wife, merrily, as the horses drew near to Fagoo. She was riding on the cliff-side.

"Into Thibet," said the Tertium Quid, "ever so far from the people who say horrid things, and hubbys who write stupid letters. With you—to the end of the world!"

A coolie carrying a log of wood came round a corner, and the mare went wide to avoid him—fore feet in and haunches out, as a sensible mare should go.

"To the world's end," said the Man's Wife, and looked unspeakable things over her near shoulder at the Tertium Quid.

He was smiling, but, while she looked, the smile froze stiff, as it were, on his face, and changed to a nervous grin—the sort of a grin men wear when they are not quite easy in their saddles. The mare seemed to be sinking by the stern, and her nostrils cracked while she was trying to realize what was happening. The rain of the previous night had rotted the drop-side of the Himalayan-Thibet Road, and it was giving way under her. "What are you doing?" said the Man's Wife. The Tertium Quid gave no answer. He grinned nervously and set his spurs into the mare, who rapped with her fore feet on the road, and the struggle began. The Man's Wife screamed: "Oh, Frank, get off!"

But the Tertium Quid was glued to the saddle—his face blue and white—and he looked into the Man's Wife's eyes. Then the Man's Wife clutched at the mare's head and caught her by the nose instead of the bridle. The brute threw up her head and went down with a scream, the Tertium Quid upon her, and the nervous grin still set on his face.

The Man's Wife heard the tinkle-tinkle of little stones and loose earth falling off the roadway, and the sliding roar of the man and horse going down. Then everything was quiet, and she called on Frank to leave his mare and walk up. But Frank did not answer. He was underneath the mare, nine hundred feet below, spoiling a patch of Indian corn.

As the revelers came back from Viceregal Lodge in the mists of the evening, they met a temporarily insane woman, on a temporarily mad horse, swinging round the

corners, with her eyes and her mouth open, and her head like the head of a Medusa. She was stopped by a man at the risk of his life, and taken out of the saddle, a limp heap, and put on the bank to explain herself. This wasted twenty minutes, and then she was sent home in a lady's 'rickshaw, still with her mouth open and her hands picking at her riding-gloves.

She was in bed for the following three days, which were rainy; so she missed attending the funeral of Tertium Quid, who was lowered into eighteen inches of water, instead of the twelve to which he had first objected.

THE HILL OF ILLUSION.

> What rendered vain their deep desire?
> A God, a God their severance ruled,
> And bade between their shores to be
> The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.
>
> M. ARNOLD.

HE.—Tell your jhampanis not to hurry so, dear. They forget I'm fresh from the Plains.

SHE.—Sure proof that *I* have not been going out with any one. Yes, they *are* an untrained crew. Where do we go?

HE.—As usual—to the world's end. No, Jakko.

SHE.—Have your pony led after you, then. It's a long round.

HE.—And for the last time, thank Heaven!

SHE.—Do you mean *that* still? I don't dare to write to you about it . . . all these months.

HE.—Mean it! I've been shaping my affairs to that end since Autumn. What makes you speak as though it had occurred to you for the first time?

SHE.—I? Oh! I don't know. I've had long enough to think, too.

HE.—And you've changed your mind?

SHE.—No. You ought to know that I am a miracle of constancy. What are your—arrangements?

HE.—*Ours,* Sweetheart, please.

SHE.—Ours be it, then. My poor boy, how the prickly heat has marked your forehead! Have you ever tried sulphate of copper in water?

HE.—It'll go away in a day or two up here. The arrangements are simple enough. Tonga in the early morning—reach Kalka at twelve—Umballa at seven—down, straight by night train, to Bombay, and then steamer of the 21st for Rome. That's my idea. The Continent and Sweden—a ten-week honeymoon.

SHE.—Sh! Don't talk of it in that way. It makes me afraid. Guy, how long have we two been insane?

HE.—Seven months and fourteen days; I forget the odd hours exactly, but I'll think.

SHE.—I only wanted to see if you remembered. Who are those two on the Blessington Road?

HE.—Eabrey and the Penner woman. What do they matter to *us?* Tell me everything that you've been doing and saying and thinking.

SHE.—Doing little, saying less, and thinking a great deal. I've hardly been out at all.

HE.—That was wrong of you. You haven't been moping?

SHE.—Not very much. Can you wonder that I'm disinclined for amusement?

HE.—Frankly, I do. Where was the difficulty?

SHE.—In this only: The more people I know and the more I'm known here, the wider spread will be the news of the crash when it comes. I don't like that.

HE.—Nonsense. We shall be out of it.

SHE.—You think so?

HE.—I'm sure of it, if there is any power in steam or horseflesh to carry us away. Ha! Ha!

SHE.—And the *fun* of the situation comes in—where, my Lancelot?

HE.—Nowhere, Guinevere. I was only thinking of something.

SHE.—They say men have a keener sense of humor than women. Now *I* was thinking of the scandal.

HE.—Don't think of anything so ugly. We shall be beyond it.

SHE.—It will be there all the same—in the mouths of Simla—telegraphed over India, and talked of at the dinners—and when He goes out they will stare at Him to see how He takes it. And we shall be dead, Guy, dear—dead and cast into the outer darkness where there is——

HE.—Love at least. Isn't that enough?

SHE.—I have said so.

HE.—And you think so still?

SHE.—What do *you* think?

HE.—What have I *done?* It means equal ruin to me, as the world reckons it—outcasting, the loss of my appointment, the breaking off my life's work. I pay my price.

SHE.—And are you so much above the world that you can afford to pay it? Am I?

HE.—My Divinity—what else?

SHE.—A very ordinary woman, I'm afraid; but, so far, respectable. How do you do, Mrs. Middleditch? Your husband? I think he's riding down to Annandale with Colonel Statters. Yes, isn't it divine after the rain?

. . . Guy, how long am I to be allowed to bow to Mrs. Middleditch? Till the 17th?

He.—Frowsy Scotch woman! What is the use of bringing her into the discussion? You were saying?

She.—Nothing. Have you ever seen a man hanged?

He.—Yes. Once.

She.—What was it for?

He.—Murder, of course.

She.—Murder! Is *that* so great a sin after all? I wonder how he felt before the drop fell.

He.—I don't think he felt much. What a grewsome little woman it is this evening! You're shivering. Put on your cape, dear.

She.—I think I will. Oh! look at the mist coming over Sanjaoli; and I thought we should have had sunshine on the Ladies' Mile! Let's turn back.

He.—What's the good? There's a cloud on Elysium Hill, and that means it's foggy all down the Mall. We'll go on. It'll blow away before we get to the Convent, perhaps. Jove! It *is* chilly.

She.—You feel it, fresh from below. Put on your ulster. What do you think of my cape?

He.—Never ask a man his opinion of a woman's dress when he is desperately and abjectly in love with the wearer. Let me look. Like everything else of yours, it's perfect. Where did you get it from?

She.—He gave it me, on Wednesday . . . our wedding day, you know.

He.—The deuce He did! He's growing generous in

his old age. D'you like all that frilly, bunchy stuff at the throat? I don't.

"Kind Sir o' your courtesy,
As you go by the town, Sir,
Pray you o' your love for me,
Buy me a russe gown Sir."

HE.—I won't say: "Keek into the draw-well, Janet, Janet." Only wait a little, darling, and you shall be stocked with russet gowns and everything else.

SHE.—And when the frocks wear out, you'll get me new ones . . . and everything else?

HE.—Assuredly.

SHE.—I wonder!

HE.—Look here, Sweetheart, I didn't spend two days and two nights in the train to hear you wonder. I thought we'd settled all that at Shaifazehat.

SHE *(dreamily)*.—At Shaifazehat? Does the Station go on still? That was ages and *ages* ago. It must be crumbling to pieces. All except the Amirtollah kutcha road. I don't believe *that* could crumble till the Day of Judgment.

HE.—You think so? What *is* the mood now?

SHE.—I can't tell. How cold it is! Let us get on quickly.

HE.—Better walk a little. Stop your jhampanis and get out. What's the matter with you this evening, dear?

SHE.—Nothing. You must grow accustomed to my ways. If I'm boring you I can go home. Here's Captain Congleton coming; I dare say he'll be willing to escort me.

HE.—Goose! Between *us*, too. *Damn* Captain Congleton. There!

SHE.—Chivalrous Knight! Is it your habit to swear much in talking? It jars a little, and you might swear at me.

HE.—My angel! I didn't know what I was saying; and you changed so quickly that I couldn't follow. I'll apologize in dust and ashes.

SHE.—Spare those. There'll be enough of them later on. Good-night, Captain Congleton. Going to the singing-quadrilles already? What dances am I giving you next week? No! You must have written them down wrong. Five and Seven, *I* said. If you've made a mistake, I certainly don't intend to suffer for it. You must alter your programme.

HE.—I thought you told me that you had not been going out much this season?

SHE.—Quite true, but when I do dance I dance with Captain Congleton. He dances very nicely.

HE.—And sit out with him, I suppose?

SHE.—Yes. Have you any objection? Shall I stand under the chandelier in the future?

HE.—What does he talk to you about?

SHE.—What do men talk about when they sit out?

HE.—Ugh! Don't! Well, now I'm up. You must dispense with the fascinating Congleton for awhile. I don't like him.

SHE *(after a pause)*.—Do you know what you have said?

HE.—Can't say that I do, exactly. I am not in the best of tempers.

SHE.—So I see . . . and feel. My true and faithful lover, where is your "eternal constancy," "unalterable trust," and "reverent devotion"? I remember those phrases; you seem to have forgotten them. I mention a man's name——

HE.—A good deal more than that.

SHE.—Well, speak to him about a dance—perhaps the last dance that I shall ever dance in my life before I . . . before I go away; and you at once distrust and insult me.

HE.—I never said a word.

SHE.—How much did you imply? Guy, is *this* amount of confidence to be our stock to start the new life on?

HE.—No, of course not. I didn't mean that. On my word and honor, I didn't. Let it pass, dear. Please let it pass.

SHE.—This once—yes—and a second time, and again and again, all through the years when I shall be unable to resent it. You want too much, my Lancelot, and . . . you know too much.

HE.—How do you mean?

SHE.—That is a part of the punishment. There *cannot* be perfect trust between us.

HE.—In Heaven's name, why not?

SHE.—Hush! The Other Place is quite enough. Ask yourself.

HE.—I don't follow.

SHE.—You trust me so implicity that when I look at

another man . . . Never mind. Guy, have you ever made love to a girl—a *good* girl?

HE.—Something of the sort. Centuries ago—in the Dark Ages, before I ever met you, dear.

SHE.—Tell me what you said to her.

HE.—What does a man say to a girl? I've forgotten.

SHE.—*I* remember. He tells her that he trusts her and worships the ground she walks on, and that he'll love and honor and protect her till her dying day; and so she marries in that belief. At least, I speak of one girl who was *not* protected.

HE.—Well, and then?

SHE.—And then, Guy, and then, that girl needs *ten* times the love and trust and honor—yes, *honor*—that was enough when she was only a mere wife if—if—the second life she elects to lead is to be made even bearable. Do you understand?

HE.—Even bearable! It'll be Paradise.

SHE.—Ah! Can you give me all I've asked for—not now, nor a few months later, but when you begin to think of what you might have done if you had kept your own appointments and your caste here—when you begin to look upon me as a drag and a burden? I shall want it most then, Guy, for there will be no one in the wide world but you.

HE.—You're a little overtired to-night, Sweetheart, and you're taking a stage view of the situation. After the necessary business in the Courts the road is clear to——

SHE.—"The holy state of matrimony!" Ha! ha! ha!

HE.—Sh! Don't laugh in that horrible way!

SHE.—I—c-c-c-can't help it! Isn't it too absurd? Ah! Ha! ha! ha! Guy, stop me quick, or I shall—l-l-laugh till we get to the Church.

HE.—For goodness' sake, stop! Don't make an exhibition of yourself. What *is* the matter with you?

SHE.—N-nothing. I'm better now.

HE.—That's all right. One moment, dear. There's a little wisp of hair got loose from behind your right ear, and it's straggling over your cheek. So!

SHE.—Thank'oo. I'm 'fraid my hat's on one side, too.

HE.—What do you wear these huge dagger bonnet-skewers for? They're big enough to kill a man with.

SHE.—Oh! Don't kill *me*, though. You're sticking it into my head! Let *me* do it. You men are so clumsy.

HE.—Have you had many opportunities of comparing us—in this sort of work?

SHE.—Guy, what is my name?

HE.—Eh! I don't follow.

SHE.—Here's my cardcase. Can you read?

HE.—Yes. Well?

SHE.—Well, that answers your question. You know the other man's name. Am I sufficiently humbled, or would you like to ask me if there is any one else?

HE.—I see now. My darling, I never meant that for an instant. I was only joking. There! Lucky there's no one on the road. They'd be scandalized.

SHE.—They'll be more scandalized before the end.

HE.—Do-on't. I don't like you to talk in that way.

SHE.—Unreasonable man! Who asked me to face the situation and accept it? Tell me, do I look like Mrs.

Penner? *Do* I look like a naughty woman? *Swear* I don't! Give me your word of honor, my *honorable* friend, that I'm not like Mrs. Buzgago. That's the way she stands, with her hands clasped at the back of her head. D'you like that?

HE.—Don't be affected.

SHE.—I'm not. I'm Mrs. Buzgago. Listen!

"Pendant une année tout entière,
Le régiment n'a pas r'paru.
Au Ministère de la Guerre
On le r'porta comme perdu.

'On se r'nonçait a r'trouver sa trace,
Quand un matin subitement,
On le vit r'paraître sur la place,
L' Colonel toujours en avant."

That's the way she rolls her r's. *Am* I like her?

HE.—No; but I object when you go on like an actress and sing stuff of that kind. Where in the world did you pick up the *Chanson du Colonel?* It isn't a drawing-room song. It isn't proper.

SHE.—Mrs. Buzgago taught it me. She is both drawing-room and proper, and in another month she'll shut her drawing-room to me, and, thank God, she isn't as improper as I am. Oh, Guy, Guy! I wish I was like some women, and had no scruples about—what is it Keene says?—"Wearing a corpse's hair and being false to the bread they eat."

HE.—I am only a man of limited intelligence, and, just now, very bewildered. When you have *quite* finished flashing through all your moods tell me and I'll try to understand the last one.

SHE.—Moods, Guy! I haven't any. I'm sixteen years old, and you're just twenty, and you've been waiting for two hours outside the school in the cold. And now I've met you, and now we're walking home together. Does *that* suit you, My Imperial Majesty?

HE.—No. We aren't children. Why can't you be rational?

SHE.—He asks me that when I'm going to commit social suicide for his sake, and, and . . . I don't want to be French and rave about "*ma mere,*" but have I ever told you that I have a mother, and a brother who was my pet before I married? He's married now. Can't you imagine the pleasure that the news of the elopement will give him? Have *you* any people at home, Guy, to be pleased with your performances?

HE.—One or two. We can't make omelets without breaking eggs.

SHE *(slowly)*.—I don't see the necessity——

HE.—Hah! What do you mean?

SHE.—Shall I speak the truth?

HE.—Under the circumstances perhaps it *would* be as well.

SHE.—Guy, I'm afraid.

HE.—I thought we'd settled all that. What of?"

SHE.—Of you.

HE.—Oh, damn it all! The old business! This is *too* bad.

SHE.—Of *you*.

HE.—And what now?

SHE.—What do you think of me?

HE.—Beside the question altogether. What do you intend to do?

SHE.—I daren't risk it. I'm afraid. If I could only cheat . . .

HE.—*A la* Buzgago? No, *thanks*. That's the one point on which I have any notion of Honor. I won't eat his salt and steal too. I'll loot openly or not at all.

SHE.—I never meant anything else.

HE.—Then why in the world do you pretend not to be willing to come?

SHE.—It's *not* pretense, Guy. I *am* afraid.

HE.—Please explain.

SHE.—It can't last, Guy. It can't last. You'll get angry, and then you'll swear, and then you'll get jealous, and then you'll mistrust me—you do *now*—and you yourself will be the best reason for doubting. And I—what shall *I* do? I shall be no better than Mrs. Buzgago found out—no better than any one. And you'll *know* that. Oh, Guy, can't you *see?*

HE.—I see that you are desperately unreasonable, little woman.

SHE.—There! The moment I begin to object you get angry. What will you do when I am only your property—stolen property? It can't be, Guy—— It can't be! I thought it could, but it *can't*. You'll get tired of me.

HE.—I tell you I shall *not*. Won't anything make you understand that?

SHE.—There, can't you see? If you speak to me like that now you'll call me horrible names later if I don't do everything as you like. And if you were cruel to me, Guy,

where should I go—where should I go? I can't trust you!

HE.—I suppose I ought to say that I *can* trust you. I've ample reason.

SHE.—*Please* don't, dear. It hurts as much as if you hit me.

HE.—It isn't exactly pleasant for me.

SHE.—I can't help it. I wish I were dead! I can't trust you, and I don't trust myself. Oh, Guy, let it die away and be forgotten!

HE.—Too late now. I don't understand you—I won't—and I can't trust myself to talk this evening. May I call to-morrow?

SHE.—Yes. *No!* Oh, give me time! The day after. I get into my 'rickshaw here and meet Him at Peliti's. You ride.

HE.—I'll go on to Peliti's, too. I think I want a drink. My world's knocked about my ears, and the stars are falling. Who are those brutes howling in the Old Library?

SHE.—They're rehearsing the singing-quadrilles for the Fancy Ball. Can't you hear Mrs. Buzgago's voice? She has a solo. It's quite a new idea. Listen!

MRS. BUZGAGO *(in the Old Library, con molt. exp.)*—

> "See-saw! Margery Daw!
> Sold her bed to lie upon straw.
> Wasn't she a silly slut
> To sell her bed and lie upon dirt?"

Captain Congleton, I'm going to alter that to "flirt." It sounds better.

HE.—No, I've changed my mind about the drink. Good-night, little lady. I shall see you to-morrow?

SHE.—Ye—s. Good-night, Guy. *Don't* be angry with me.

HE.—Angry! You *know* I trust you absolutely. Good-night, and—God bless you!

(Three seconds later. Solus.) H'm! I'd give something to discover whether there's another man at the back of all this.

A SECOND-RATE WOMAN.

Est fuga, volvitur rota,
On we drift: where looms the dim port?
One Two Three Four Five contribute their quota:
Something is gained if one caught but the import,
Show it us, Hugues of Saxe-Gotha.
Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha.

"DRESSED! Don't tell me that woman ever dressed in her life. She stood in the middle of the room while her ayah—no, her husband—it *must* have been a man—threw her clothes at her. She then did her hair with her fingers and rubbed her bonnet in the flue under the bed. I *know* she did as well as if I had assisted at the orgy. Who is she?" said Mrs. Hauksbee.

"Don't," said Mrs. Mallowe, feebly. "You make my head ache. I'm miserable to-day. Stay with me *fondants*, comfort me with chocolates, for I am . . . Did you bring anything from Peliti's?"

"Questions to begin with. You shall have the sweets when you have answered them. Who and what is the creature? There were at least half a dozen men round her, and she appeared to be going to sleep in their midst.

"Delville," said Mrs. Mallowe, "'Shady' Delville, to distinguish her from Mrs. Jim of that ilk. She dances as untidily as she dresses, I believe, and her husband is

somewhere in Madras. Go and call, if you are so interested."

"What have I to do with Shigramitish women? She merely caught my attention for a minute, and I wondered at the attraction that a dowd has for a certain type of man. I expected to see her walk out of her clothes—until I looked at her eyes."

"Hooks and eyes, surely," drawled Mrs. Mallowe.

"Don't be clever, Polly. You make my head ache. And round this hayrick stood a crowd of men—a positive crowd!"

"Perhaps *they* also expected——"

"Polly, don't be Rabelaisian!"

Mrs. Mallowe curled herself up comfortably on the sofa and turned her attention to the sweets. She and Mrs. Hauksbee shared the same house at Simla; and these things befell two seasons after the matter of Otis Yeere, which has been already recorded.

Mrs. Hauksbee stepped into the veranda and looked down upon the Mall, her forehead puckered with thought.

"Hah!" said Mrs. Hauksbee, shortly. "Indeed!"

"What is it?" said Mrs. Mallowe, sleepily.

"That dowd and The Dancing Master—to whom I object."

"Why to The Dancing Master? He is a middle-aged gentleman, of reprobate and romantic tendencies and tries to be a friend of mine."

"Then make up your mind to lose him. Dowds cling by nature, and I should imagine that this animal—how

terrible her bonnet looks from above!—is specially clingsome."

"She is welcome to The Dancing Master so far as I am concerned. I never could take an interest in a monotonous liar. The frustrated aim of his life is to persuade people that he is a bachelor."

"O-oh! I think I've met that sort of man before. And isn't he?"

"No. He confided that to me a few days ago. Ugh! Some men ought to be killed."

"What happened then?"

"He posed as the horror of horrors—a misunderstood man. Heaven knows the *femme incomprise* is sad enough and bad enough—but the other thing?"

"And so fat, too! *I* should have laughed in his face. Men seldom confide in me. How is it they come to you?"

"For the sake of impressing me with their careers in the past. Protect me from men with confidences!"

"And yet you encourage them?"

"What can I do? They talk, I listen, and they vow that I am sympathetic. I know I always profess astonishment even when the plot is—of the most old possible."

"Yes. Men are so unblushingly explicit if they are once allowed to talk, whereas women's confidences are full of reservations and fibs, except——"

"When they go mad and babble of the Unutterabilities after a week's acquaintance. Even then they always paint themselves *a la* Mrs. Gummidge—throwing cold water on *him*. Really, if you come to consider, we know a great deal more of men than of our own sex."

"And the extraordinary thing is that men will never believe it. They say we are trying to hide something."

"They are generally doing that on their own account—and very clumsily they hide. Alas! These chocolates pall upon me, and I haven't eaten more than a dozen. I think I shall go to sleep."

"Then you'll get fat, dear. If you took more exercise and a more intelligent interest in your neighbors you would——"

"Be as universally loved as Mrs. Hauksbee. You're a darling in many ways, and I like you—you are not a woman's woman—but *why* do you trouble yourself about mere human beings?"

"Because in the absence of angels, who, I am sure, would be horribly dull, men and women are the most fascinating things in the whole wide world, lazy one. I am interested in The Dowd—I am interested in The Dancing Master—I am interested in the Hawley Boy—and I am interested in *you*."

"Why couple *me* with the Hawley Boy? He is your property."

"Yes, and in his own guileless speech, I'm making a good thing out of him. When he is slightly more reformed and has passed his Higher Standard, or whatever the authorities think fit to exact from him, I shall select a pretty little girl, the Holt girl, I think, and"—here she waved her hands airily—"'whom Mrs. Hauksbee hath joined together let no man put asunder.' That's all."

"And when you have yoked May Holt with the most notorious detrimental in Simla and earned the undying

hatred of Mamma Holt, what will you do with me, Dispenser of the Destinies of the Universe?"

Mrs. Hauksbee dropped into a low chair in front of the fire and chin in hand gazed long and steadfastly at Mrs. Mallowe.

"I do not know," she said, shaking her head, "*what* I shall do with you, dear. It's obviously impossible to marry you to some one else—your husband would object, and the experiment might not be successful after all. I think I shall begin by preventing you from—what is it?—'sleeping on alehouse benches and snoring in the sun.'"

"Don't! I don't like your quotations. They are so rude. Go to the Library and bring me new books."

"While you sleep? *No!* If you don't come with me I shall spread your newest frock on my 'rickshaw bow, and when any one asks me what I am doing I shall say that I am going to Phelps' to get it let out. I shall take care that Mrs. McNamara sees me. Put your things on, there's a good girl."

Mrs. Mallowe groaned and obeyed and the two went off to the Library, where they found Mrs. Delville and the man who went by the nickname of The Dancing Master. By that time Mrs. Mallowe was awake and eloquent.

"That is the Creature!" said Mrs. Hauksbee, with the air of one pointing out a slug in the road.

"No," said Mrs. Mallowe. "The man is the creature. Ugh! Good evening, Mr. Bent. I thought you were coming to tea this evening."

"Surely it was for to morrow, was it not?" answered The Dancing Master. "I understood . . . I fancied . . I'm so sorry . . How very unfortunate! . ."

But Mrs. Mallowe had passed on.

"For the practiced equivocator you said he was," murmured Mrs. Hauksbee, "he strikes *me* as a failure. Now, wherefore should he have preferred a walk with The Dowd to tea with us? Elective affinities, I suppose—both grubby. Polly, I'd never forgive that woman as long as the world rolls."

"I forgive every woman everything," said Mrs. Mallowe. "He will be a sufficient punishment for her. What a common voice she has!"

Mrs. Delville's voice was not pretty, her carriage was even less lovely, and her raiment was strikingly neglected. All these facts Mrs. Mallowe absorbed over the top of a magazine.

"Now, *what* is there in her?" said Mrs. Hauksbee. "Do you see what I meant about the clothes falling off? If I were a man I would perish sooner than be seen with that rag-bag. And yet, she has good eyes, but—oh!"

"What is it?"

"She doesn't know how to use them! On my Honor, she does not. Look! Oh, look! Untidiness I can endure, but ignorance never! The woman's a fool."

"H'sh! She'll hear you."

"All the women in Simla are fools. She'll think I mean some one else. Now she's going out. What a thoroughly objectionable couple she and The Dancing Master make! Which reminds me. Do you suppose they'll ever dance together?"

"Wait and see. I don't envy her the conversation of The Dancing Master—loathly man! His wife ought to be up here before long."

"Do you know anything about him?"

"Only what he told me. It may be all a fiction. He married a girl bred in the country, I think, and, being an honorable, chivalrous soul, told me that he repented his bargain and sent her to the mother as often as possible—a person who has lived in the Doon since the memory of man, and goes to Mussoorie when other people go home. The wife is with her at present. So he says."

"Babies?"

"One only, but he talked of his wife in a revolting way. I hated him for it. *He* thought he was being epigrammatic and brilliant."

"That is a vice peculiar to men. I dislike him because he is generally in the wake of some girl, to the disgust of the Eligibles. He will persecute May Holt no more, unless I am much mistaken."

"No. I think Mrs. Delville may occupy his attention for awhile."

"Do you suppose she knows that he is the head of a family?"

"Not from his lips. He swore me to eternal secrecy. Wherefore I tell you. Don't you know that type of man?"

"Not intimately, thank goodness! As a general rule, when a man begins to abuse his wife to me I find that the Lord gives me wherewith to answer him according to his folly, and we part with a coolness between us. I laugh."

"I'm different. I've no sense of humor."

"Cultivate it, then. It has been my mainstay for more years than I care to think about. A well-educated sense of humor will save a woman when Religion, Training,

and Home influences fail. And we may all need salvation sometimes."

"Do you suppose that the Delville woman has humor?"

"Her dress bewrays her. How can a Thing who wears her *supplement* under her left arm have any notion of the fitness of things—much less their folly? If she discards The Dancing Master after having once seen him dance I may respect her. Otherwise——"

"But are we not both assuming a great deal too much, dear? You saw the woman at Peliti's—half an hour later you saw her walking with The Dancing Master—an hour later you met her here at the Library."

"Still with The Dancing Master, remember."

"Still with The Dancing Master, I admit; but why on the strength of that should you imagine——"

"I imagine nothing. I have no imagination. I am only convinced that The Dancing Master is attracted to The Dowd because he is objectionable in every way and she in every other. If I know the man as you have described him he holds his wife in deadly subjection at present."

"She is twenty years younger than he."

"Poor wretch! And, in the end, after he has posed and swaggered and lied—he has a mouth under that ragged mustache simply made for lies—he will be rewarded according to his merits."

"I wonder what those really are," said Mrs. Mallowe.

But Mrs. Hauksbee, her face close to the shelf of the new books, was humming softly: "What shall he have who killed the Deer?" She was a lady of unfettered speech. One month later she announced her intention

of calling upon Mrs. Delville. Both Mrs. Hauksbee and Mrs. Mallowe were in morning wrappers and there was great peace in the land.

"I should go as I was," said Mrs. Mallowe. "It would be a delicate compliment to her style."

Mrs. Hauksbee studied herself in the glass.

"Assuming for a moment that she ever darkened these doors, I should put on this robe, after all the others, to show her what a morning wrapper ought to be. It might enliven her. As it is, I shall go in the dove-colored—sweet emblem of youth and innocence—and shall put on my new gloves."

"If you really are going, dirty tan would be too good; and you know that dove color spots with the rain."

"I care not. I may make her envious. At least I shall try, though one cannot expect very much from a woman who puts a lace tucker into her habit."

"Just Heavens! When did she do that?"

"Yesterday—riding with The Dancing Master. I met them at the back of Jakko, and the rain had made the lace lie down. To complete the effect, she was wearing an unclean terai with the elastic under her chin. I felt almost too well content to take the trouble to despise her."

"The Hawley Boy was riding with you. What did he think?"

"Does a boy ever notice these things? Should I like him if he did? He stared in the rudest way, and just when I thought he had seen the elastic he said: 'There's something very taking about that face.' I rebuked him

on the spot. I don't approve of boys being taken by faces."

"Other than your own. I shouldn't be in the least surprised if the Hawley Boy immediately went to call."

"I forbid him. Let her be satisfied with The Dancing Master, and his wife when she comes up. I'm rather curious to see Mrs. Bent and the Delville woman together."

Mrs. Hauksbee departed, and at the end of an hour returned slightly flushed.

"There is no limit to the treachery of youth! I *ordered* the Hawley Boy, as he valued my patronage, not to call. The first person I stumble over—literally stumble over—in her poky, dark little drawing room is, of course, the Hawley Boy. She kept us waiting ten minutes and then emerged as though she had been tipped out of the dirty clothes basket. You know my way, dear, when I am all put out. I was Superior, *c-r-r-r-rushingly* Superior! Lifted my eyes to Heaven and had heard of nothing—dropped my eyes on the carpet, and, really didn't know—played with my cardcase and 'supposed so.' The Hawley Boy giggled like a girl, and I had to freeze him with scowls between the sentences."

"And she?"

"She sat in a heap on the edge of a couch and managed to convey the impression that she was suffering from stomach-ache at the very least. It was all I could do not to ask after her symptoms. When I rose she grunted just like a buffalo in the water—too lazy to move."

"Are you certain——"

"Am I blind, Polly? Laziness, sheer laziness, nothing else—or her garments were only constructed for sitting down in. I stayed for a quarter of an hour trying to penetrate the gloom, to guess what her surroundings were like, while she stuck out her tongue."

"Lu-*cy!*"

"Well—I'll withdraw the tongue, though I'm sure if she didn't do it when I was in the room she did the minute I was outside. At any rate, she lay in a lump and grunted. Ask the Hawley Boy, dear. I believe the grunts were meant for sentences, but she spoke so indistinctly that I can't swear to it."

"You are incorrigible, simply."

"I am *not!* Treat me civilly, give me peace with honor, don't put the only available seat facing the window, and a child may eat jam in my lap before Church. But I resent being grunted at. Wouldn't you. Do you suppose that she communicates her views on life and love to The Dancing Master in a set of modulated 'Grumphs'?"

"You attach too much importance to The Dancing Master."

"He came as we went, and The Dowd grew almost cordial at the sight of him. He smiled greasily and moved about that darkened dog-kennel in a suspiciously familiar way."

"Don't be uncharitable. Any sin but that I'll forgive."

"Listen to the voice of History. I am only describing what I saw. He entered, the heap on the sofa revived slightly, and the Hawley Boy and I came away together.

He is disillusioned, but I felt it my duty to lecture him severely for going there. And that's all."

"Now for pity's sake leave the wretched creature and The Dancing Master alone. They never did you any harm."

"No harm! To dress as an example and a stumbling block for half Simla, and then to find this Person who is dressed by the hand of God—not that I wish to disparage *Him* for a moment, but you know the tikka-dhurzie way, He attires those lilies of the field—this Person draws the eyes of men—and some of them nice men! It's almost enough to make one discard clothing. I told the Hawley Boy so."

"And what did that sweet youth do?"

"Turned shell pink and looked across the far blue hills like a distressed cherub. *Am* I talking wildly, Polly? Let me say my say and I shall be calm. Otherwise I may go abroad and disturb Simla with a few original reflections. Excepting always your own sweet self, there isn't a single woman in the land who understands me when I am—what's the word?"

"Tete-Felee," suggested Mrs. Mallowe.

"Exactly! And now let us have tiffin. The demands of Society are exhausting, and as Mrs. Delville says——" Here Mrs. Hauksbee, to the horror of the khitmatgars, lapsed into a series of grunts, while Mrs. Mallowe stared in lazy surprise.

"'God gie us a gude conceit of oorselves,'" said Mrs. Hauksbee, piously, returning to her natural speech. "Now, in any other woman that would have been vulgar,

I am consumed with curiosity to see Mrs. Bent. I expect complications."

"Woman of one idea," said Mrs. Mallowe, shortly, "all complications are as old as the hills! I have lived through or near all—*all*—ALL!"

"And yet do not understand that men and women never behave twice alike. I am old who was young—if ever I put my head in your lap, you dear, big skeptic, you will learn that my parting is gauze—but never, no never, have I lost my interest in men and women. Polly, I shall see this business out to the bitter end."

"I am going to sleep," said Mrs. Mallowe, calmly. "I never interfere with men or women unless I am compelled," and she retired with dignity to her own room.

Mrs. Hauksbee's curiosity was not long left ungratified, for Mrs. Bent came up to Simla a few days after the conversation faithfully reported above and pervaded the Mall by her husband's side.

"Behold!" said Mrs. Hauksbee, thoughtfully rubbing her nose. "That is the last link of the chain, if we omit the husband of the Dolville, whoever he may be. Let me consider. The Bents and the Dolvilles inhabit the same hotel; and the Dolville is detested by the Waddy—do you know the Waddy?—who is almost as big a dowd. The Waddy also abominates the male Bent, for which, if her other sins do not weigh too heavily, she will eventually be caught up to Heaven."

"Don't be irreverent," said Mrs. Mallowe. "I like Mrs. Bent's face."

"I am discussing the Waddy," returned Mrs. Hauks-

bee, loftily. "The Waddy will take the female Bent apart, after having borrowed—yes!—everything that she can, from hairpins to babies' bottles. Such, my dear, is life in a hotel. The Waddy will tell the female Bent facts and fictions about The Dancing Master and The Dowd."

"Lucy, I should like you better if you were not always looking into people's back bedrooms."

"Anybody can look into their front drawing-rooms, and remember, whatever I do, whatever I look, I never talk—as the Waddy will. Let us hope that The Dancing Master's greasy smile and manner of the pedagogue will 'soften the heart of that cow,' his wife. If mouths speak truth I should think that little Mrs. Bent could get very angry on occasion."

"But what reason has she for being angry?"

"What reason! The Dancing Master in himself is a reason. How does it go? 'If in his life some trivial errors fall, Look in his face and you'll believe them all.' I am prepared to credit *any* evil of The Dancing Master, because I hate him so. And The Dowd is so disgustingly badly dressed——"

"That she, too, is capable of every iniquity? I always prefer to believe the best of everybody. It saves so much trouble."

"Very good. I prefer to believe the worst. It saves useless expenditure of sympathy. And you may be quite certain that the Waddy believes with me."

Mrs. Mallowe sighed and made no answer.

The conversation was holden after dinner while Mrs. Hauksbee was dressing for a dance.

"I am too tired to go," pleaded Mrs. Mallowe; and Mrs. Hauksbee left her in peace till two in the morning, when she was aware of emphatic knocking at her door.

"Don't be *very* angry, dear," said Mrs. Hauksbee. "My idiot of an ayah has gone home, and, as I hope to sleep to-night, there isn't a soul in the place to unlace me."

"Oh, this is too bad!" said Mrs. Mallowe, sulkily.

"Can't help it. I'm a lone, lorn grass-widow, but I will *not* sleep in my stays. And such news, too! Oh, *do* unlace me, there's a darling! The Dowd—The Dancing Master—I and the Hawley Boy—You know the North Veranda?"

"How can I do anything if you spin round like this?" protested Mrs. Mallowe, fumbling with the knot of the lace.

"Oh, I forget. I must tell my tale without the aid of your eyes. Do you know you've lovely eyes, dear? Well to begin with, I took the Hawley Boy to a kala juggah."

"Did he want much taking?"

"Lots! There was an arrangement of loose-boxes in kanats, and *she* was in the next one talking to *him*."

"Which? How? Explain."

"You know what I mean—The Dowd and The Dancing Master. We could hear every word, and we listened shamelessly—'specially the Hawley Boy. Polly, I quite love that woman!"

"This is interesting. There! Now turn round. What happened?

"One moment. Ah—h! Blessed relief. I've been looking forward to taking them off for the last half hour

—which is ominous at my time of life. But, as I was saying, we listened and heard The Dowd drawl worse than ever. She drops her final g's like a bermaid or a blue-blooded Aid-de-Camp. 'Look he'ere, you're gettin' too fond o' me,' she said, and The Dancing Master owned it was so in language that nearly made me ill. The Dowd reflected for awhile. Then we heard her say, 'Look he'ere, Mister Bent, why are you such an aw-ful liar?' I nearly exploded while The Dancing Master denied the charge. 'It seems he never told her he was a married man."

"I said he wouldn't."

"And she had taken this to heart, on personal grounds, I suppose. She drawled along for five minutes, reproaching him with his perfidy, and grew quite motherly. 'Now, you've got a nice little wife of your own—you have,' she said. 'She's ten times too good for a fat old man like you, and, look he'ere, you never told me a word about her, and I've been thinking about it a good deal, and I think you're a liar.' Wasn't that delicious? The Dancing Master maundered and raved till the Hawley Boy suggested that he should burst in and beat him. His voice runs up into an impassioned squeak when he is afraid. The Dowd must be an extraordinary woman. She explained that had he been a bachelor she might not have objected to his devotion; but since he was a married man and the father of a very nice baby, she considered him a hypocrite, and this she repeated twice. She wound up her drawl with: 'An' I'm tellin' you this because your wife is angry with me, an' I hate quarrelin' with any other woman, an' I like your wife. You know how you have behaved for

the last six weeks. You shouldn't have done it, indeed you shouldn't. You're too old an' too fat.' Can't you imagine how The Dancing Master would wince at that! 'Now go away,' she said. 'I don't want to tell you what I think of you, because I think you are not nice. I'll stay he'ere till the next dance begins.' Did you think that the creature had so much in her?"

"I never studied her as closely as you did. It sounds unnatural. What happened?"

"The Dancing Master attempted blandishment, reproof, jocularity, and the style of the Lord High Warden, and I had almost to pinch the Hawley Boy to make him keep quiet. She grunted at the end of each sentence, and, in the end, *he* went away, swearing to himself, quite like a man in a novel. He looked more objectionable than ever. I laughed. I love that woman—in spite of her clothes. And now I'm going to bed. What do you think of it?"

"I shan't begin to think till the morning," said Mrs. Mallowe, yawning. "Perhaps he spoke the truth. They do fly into it by accident sometimes."

Mrs. Hauk's accent of her eavesdropping was an ornate one, but truthful in the main. For reasons best known to herself, Mrs. "Shady" Delville had turned upon Mr. Bent and rent him limb from limb, casting him away limp and disconcerted ere she withdrew the light of her eyes from him permanently. Being a man of resource, and anything but pleased in that he had been called both old and fat, he gave Mrs. Bent to understand that he had, during her absence in the Dream, been the victim of unceasing persecution at the hands of Mrs. Delville, and he

told the tale so often and with such eloquence that he ended in believing it, while his wife marveled at the manners and customs of "some women." When the situation showed signs of languishing, Mrs. Waddy was always on hand to wake the smoldering fires of suspicion in Mrs. Bent's bosom, and to contribute generally to the peace and comfort of the hotel. Mr. Bent's life was not a happy one, for if Mrs. Waddy's story was true, he was, argued his wife, untrustworthy to the last degree. If his own statement was true, his charms of manner and conversation were so great that he needed constant surveillance. And he received it, till he repented genuinely of his marriage and neglected his personal appearance. Mrs. Delville alone in the hotel was unchanged. She removed her chair some six paces toward the head of the table, and occasionally in the twilight ventured on timid overtures of friendship to Mrs. Bent, which were repulsed.

"She does it for my sake," hinted the virtuous Bent.

"A dangerous and designing woman," purred Mrs. Waddy.

Worst of all, every hotel in Simla was full!

* * * * * * *

"Polly, are you afraid of diphtheria?"

"Of nothing in the world except smallpox. Diphtheria kills, but it doesn't disfigure. Why do you ask?"

"Because the Bent baby has got it, and the whole hotel is upside down in consequence. The Waddy has 'set her five young on the rail' and fled. The Dancing Master fears for his precious throat, and that miserable little woman, his wife, has no notion of what ought to be done. She wanted to put it into a mustard bath—for croup!"

"Where did you learn all this?"

"Just now, on the Mall. Dr. Howlen told me. The Manager of the hotel is abusing the Bents, and the Bents are abusing the Manager. They *are* a feckless couple."

"Well. What's on your mind?"

"This; and I know it's a grave thing to ask. Would you seriously object to my bringing the child over here, with its mother?"

"On the most strict understanding that we see nothing of The Dancing Master."

"He will be only too glad to stay away. Polly, you're an angel. The woman really is at her wits' end."

"And you know nothing about her, careless, and would hold her up to public scorn if it gave you a minute's amusement. Therefore you risk your life for the sake of her brat. No, Loo, *I'm* not the angel. I shall keep to my rooms and avoid her. But do as you please—only tell me why you do it."

Mrs. Hauksbee's eyes softened; she looked out of the window and back into Mrs. Mallowe's face.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Hauksbee, simply.

"You dear!"

"Polly!—and for aught you know you might have taken my fringe off. Never do that again without warning. Now, we'll get the rooms ready. I don't suppose I shall be allowed to circulate in society for a month."

"And I also. Thank goodness I shall at last get all the sleep I want."

Much to Mrs. Bent's surprise, she and the baby were brought over to the house almost before she knew where she was. Bent was devoutly and undisguisedly thankful,

for he was afraid of the infection, and also hoped that a few weeks in the hotel with Mrs. Delville alone might lead to some sort of explanation.

Mrs. Bent had cast her jealousy to the winds in her fear for her child's life.

"We can give you good milk," said Mrs. Hauksbee to her, "and our house is much nearer to the Doctor's than the hotel, and you won't feel as though you were living in a hostile camp. Where is the dear Mrs. Waddy? She seemed to be a particular friend of yours."

"They've all left me," said Mrs. Bent, bitterly. "Mrs. Waddy went first. She said I ought to be ashamed of myself for introducing diseases there, and I am *sure* it wasn't my fault that little Dora——"

"How nice!" cooed Mrs. Hauksbee. "The Waddy is an infectious disease herself—'more quickly caught than the plague, and the taker runs presently mad.' I lived next door to her at the Elysium, three years ago. Now, see, you won't give us the *least* trouble, and I've ornamented all the house with sheets soaked in carbolic. It smells comforting, doesn't it? Remember, I'm always in call, and my ayah's at your service when yours goes to her meals, and . . . and . . . if you cry I'll *never* forgive you."

Dora Bent occupied her mother's unprofitable attention through the day and the night. The Doctor called thrice in the twenty four hours, and the house reeked with the smell of the Condy's Fluid, chlorine water, and carbolic acid washes. Mrs. Mallowe kept to her own rooms—she considered that she had made sufficient concessions in the cause of humanity—and Mrs. Hauksbee was more es-

teemed by the Doctor as a help in the sick-room than the half-distraught mother.

"I know nothing of illness," said Mrs. Hauksbee to the Doctor. "Only tell me what to do, and I'll do it."

"Keep that crazy woman from kissing the child, and let her have as little to do with the nursing as you possibly can," said the Doctor; "I'd turn her out of the sick-room but that I honestly believe she'd die of anxiety. She is less than no good, and I depend on you and the ayahs, remember."

Mrs. Hauksbee accepted the responsibility, even though it painted olive hollows under her eyes and forced her into her oldest dresses. Mrs. Bent clung to her with more than child-like faith.

"I *know* you'll make Dora well, won't you?" she said at least twenty times a day. Mrs. Hauksbee answered valiantly: "Of course I will."

But Dora did not improve, and the Doctor seemed to be always in the house.

"There's some danger of the thing taking a bad turn," he said; "I'll come over between three and four in the morning to-morrow."

"Good gracious!" said Mrs. Hauksbee. "He never told me what the turn would be! My education has been horribly neglected; and I have only this foolish mother woman to fall back upon."

The night wore through slowly, and Mrs. Hauksbee dozed in a chair by the fire. There was a dance at the Viceregal Lodge, and she dreamed of it till she was aware of Mrs. Bent's anxious eyes staring into her own.

"Wake up! Wake up! Do something!" cried Mrs.

Bent, piteously. "Dora's choking to death! Do you mean to let her die?"

Mrs. Hauksbee jumped to her feet and bent over the bed. The child was fighting for breath, while the mother wrung her hands in despair.

"Oh, what can I do? What can I do? She won't stay still! I can't hold her. Why didn't the Doctor say this was coming?" screamed Mrs. Bent. "*Won't* you help me? She's dying!"

"I—I've never seen a child die before!" stammered Mrs. Hauksbee, feebly, and then—let no one blame her weakness after the strain of long watching—she broke down, and covered her face with her hands. The ayahs on the threshold snored peacefully.

There was a rattle of 'rickshaw wheels below, the clash of an opening door, a heavy step on the stairs, and Mrs. Delville entered to find Mrs. Bent screaming for the Doctor as she ran round the room. Mrs. Hauksbee, her hands to her ears, and her face buried in the chintz of a chair, was quivering with pain at each cry from the bed, and murmuring: "Thank God, I never bore a child! Oh! thank God I never bore a child!"

Mrs. Delville looked at the bed for an instant, took Mrs. Bent by the shoulders, and said quietly: "Get me some caustic. Be quick."

The mother obeyed mechanically. Mrs. Delville had thrown herself down by the side of the child and was opening its mouth.

"Oh, you're killing her!" cried Mrs. Bent. "Where's the Doctor? Leave her alone!"

Mrs. Delville made no reply for a minute, but busied herself with the child.

"Now the caustic, and hold a lamp behind my shoulder. *Will* you do as you are told? The acid bottle, if you don't know what I mean," she said.

A second time Mrs. Delville bent over the child. Mrs. Hauksbee, her face still hidden, sobbed and shivered. One of the ayahs staggered sleepily into the room, yawning: "Doctor Sahib hai."

Mrs. Delville turned her head.

"You're only just in time," she said. "It was chokin' her when I came, an' I've burnt it."

"There was no sign of the membrane getting to the air passages after the last steaming. It was the general weakness I feared," said the Doctor, half to himself, and he whispered, as he looked: "You've done what I should have been afraid to do without consultation."

"She was dyin'," said Mrs. Delville, under her breath. "Can you do anythin'? What a mercy it was I went to the dance!"

Mrs. Hauksbee raised her head.

"Is it all over?" she gasped. "I'm useless. I'm worse than useless! What are *you* doing here?"

She stared at Mrs. Delville, and Mrs. Bent, realizing for the first time who was the Goddess from the Machine, stared also.

Then Mrs. Delville made explanation, putting on a dirty long glove and smoothing a crumpled and ill fitting ball-dress.

"I was at the dance, and the Doctor was tellin' me about your baby bein' so ill. So I came away early, an'

your door was open, an' I—I—lost my boy this way six months ago, an' I've been tryin' to forget it ever since, an' I—I—I am very sorry for intrudin' an' anythin' that has happened."

Mrs. Bent was putting out the Doctor's eye with a lamp as he stooped over Dora.

"Take it away," said the Doctor. "I think the child will do, thanks to you, Mrs. Delville. *I* should have come too late, but, I assure you"—he was addressing himself to Mrs. Delville—"I had not the faintest reason to expect *this*. The membrane must have grown like a mushroom. Will one of you ladies help me, please?"

He had reason for his concluding sentence. Mrs. Hauksbee had thrown herself into Mrs. Delville's arms, where she was weeping copiously, and Mrs. Bent was unpicturesquely mixed up with both, while from the triple tangle came the sound of many sobs and much promiscuous kissing.

"Good gracious! I've spoiled all your beautiful roses!" said Mrs. Hauksbee, lifting her head from the lump of crushed gum and calico atrocities on Mrs. Delville's shoulder and hurrying to the Doctor.

Mrs. Delville picked up her shawl, and slouched out of the room, mopping her eyes with the glove that she had not put on.

"I always said she was more than a woman," sobbed Mrs. Hauksbee, hysterically, "and *that* proves it!"

* * * * * * *

Six weeks later, Mrs. Bent and Dora had returned to the hotel. Mrs. Hauksbee had come out of the Valley of Humiliation, had ceased to reproach herself for her col-

lapse in an hour of bitter need, and was even beginning to direct the affairs of the world as before.

"So nobody died, and everything went off as it should, and I kissed The Dowd. Polly, I feel so old. Does it show in my face?"

"Kisses don't as a rule, do they? Of course you know what the result of The Dowd's providential arrival has been."

"They ought to build her a statue—only no sculptor dare reproduce those skirts."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Mallowe, quietly. "She has found another reward. The Dancing Master has been smirking through Simla, giving every one to understand that she came because of her undying love for him—for him—to save *his* child, and all Simla naturally believes this."

"But Mrs. Bent——"

"Mrs. Bent believes it more than any one else. She won't speak to The Dowd now. *Isn't* The Dancing Master an angel?"

Mrs. Hauksbee lifted up her voice and raged till bedtime. The doors of the two rooms stood open.

"Polly," said a voice from the darkness, "what did that American-heiress-globe-trotter girl say last season when she was tipped out of her 'rickshaw turning a corner? Some absurd adjective that made the man who picked her up explode."

"'Paltry,'" said Mrs. Mallowe. "Through her nose—like this—Ha-ow pahltry!"

"Exactly," said the voice. "Ha-ow pahltry it all is!"

"Which?"

"Everything. Babies, Diphtheria, Mrs. Bent and The

Dancing Master, I whooping in a chair, and The Dowd dropping in from the clouds. I wonder what the motive was—*all* the motives."

"Um!"

"What do *you* think?"

"Don't ask me. She was a woman. Go to sleep."

A WAYSIDE COMEDY.

Because to every purpose there is time and judgment; therefore the misery of man is great upon him.—*Eccl. viii., 6.*

Fate and the Government of India have turned the Station of Kashima into a prison; and, because there is no help for the poor souls who are now lying there in torment, I write this story, praying that the Government of India may be moved to scatter the European population to the four winds.

Kashima is bounded on all sides by the rock-tipped circle of the Doschri hills. In Spring, it is ablaze with roses; in Summer, the roses die and the hot winds blow from the hills; in Autumn, the white mists from the jhils cover the place as with water, and in Winter the frosts nip everything young and tender to earth level. There is but one view in Kashima—that of a stretch of perfectly flat pasture and plow-land, running up to the gray-blue scrub of the Doschri hills.

There are no amusements except snipe and tiger shooting; but the tigers have been long since hunted from their lairs in the rock-caves, and the snipe only come once a year. Narkarra—one hundred and forty-three miles by road—is the nearest station to Kashima. But Kashima never goes to Narkarra, where there are at least twelve English people. It stays within the circle of the Doschri hills.

All Kashima acquits Mrs. Vansuythen of any intention to do harm; but all Kashima knows that she, and she alone, brought about their pain.

Boulte, the engineer, Mrs. Boulte, and Captain Kurreil know this. They are the English population of Kashima, if we except Major Vansuythen, who is of no importance whatever, and Mrs. Vansuythen, who is the most important of all.

You must remember, though you will not understand, that all laws weaken in a small and hidden community where there is no public opinion. If the Israelites had been only a ten-cent camp of gypsies, their Headman would never have taken the trouble to climb a hill and bring down the lithographed edition of the Decalogue, and a great deal of trouble would have been avoided. When a man is absolutely alone in a Station, he runs a certain risk of falling into evil ways. The risk is multiplied by every addition to the population up to twelve—the Jury number. After that, fear and consequent restraint begin, and human action becomes less grotesquely jerky.

There was deep peace in Kashima till Mrs. Vansuythen arrived. She was a charming woman, every one said so everywhere; and she charmed every one. In spite of this, or, perhaps, because of this, since Fate is so maliciously perverse, she cared only for one man, and he was Major Vansuythen. Had she been plain or stupid, this matter would have been intelligible to Kashima. But she was a fair woman, with very still gray eys, the color of a lake just before the light of the sun touches it. No man who had seen those eyes could, later on, explain what

fashion of woman she was to look upon. The eyes dazzled him. Her own sex said she was "not bad looking, but spoiled by pretending to be so grave." And yet her gravity was natural. It was not her habit to smile. She merely went through life, looking at those who passed; and the women objected, while the men fell down and worshiped.

She knows and is deeply sorry for the evil she has done to Kashima; but Major Vansuythen can not understand why Mrs. Boulte does not drop in to afternoon tea at least three times a week. "When there are only two women in one Station, they ought to see a great deal of each other," says Major Vansuythen.

Long and long before ever Mrs. Vansuythen came out of those far-away places where there is society and amusement, Kurrell had discovered that Mrs. Boulte was the one woman in the world for him, and—you dare not blame them. Kashima was as out of the world as Heaven or the other place, and the Doshri hills kept their secret well. Boulte had no concern in the matter. He was in the camp for a fortnight at a time. He was a hard, heavy man, and neither Mrs. Boulte nor Kurrell pitied him. They had all Kashima and each other for their very, very own; and Kashima was the Garden of Eden in those days. When Boulte returned from his wanderings he would slap Kurrell between the shoulders and call him "old fellow," and the three would dine together. Kashima was happy then when the judgment of God seemed almost as distant as Narkarra or the railway that ran down to the sea. But the Government sent Major Vansuythen to Kashima, and with him came his wife.

The etiquette of Kashima is much the same as that of a desert island. When a stranger is cast away there, all hands go down to the shore to make him welcome. Kashima assembled at the masonry platform close to the Narkarra Road, and spread tea for the Vansuythens. That ceremony was reckoned a formal call, and made them free of the Station, its rights and privileges. When the Vansuythens were settled down, they gave a tiny house-warming to all Kashima; and that made Kashima free of their house, according to the immemorial usage of the Station.

Then the Rains came, when no one could go into camp, and the Narkarra Road was washed away by the Kasun River, and in the cup-like pastures of Kashima the cattle waded knee-deep. The clouds dropped down from the Dosehri hills and covered everything.

At the end of the Rains, Boulte's manner toward his wife changed and became demonstratively affectionate. They had been married twelve years, and the change startled Mrs. Boulte, who had hated her husband with the hate of a woman who has met with nothing but kindness from her mate, and, in the teeth of this kindness, has done him a great wrong. Moreover, she had her own trouble to fight with—her watch to keep over her own property, Kurrell. For two months the Rains had hidden the Dosehri hills and many other things beside; but when they lifted, they showed Mrs. Boulte that her man among men, her Ted—for she called him Ted in the old days when Boulte was out of ear-shot—was slipping the links of the allegiance.

"The Vansuythen Woman has taken him," Mrs. Boulte

said to herself; and when Boulte was away, wept over her belief, in the face of the over-vehement blandishments of Ted. Sorrow in Kashima is as fortunate as Love, in that there is nothing to weaken it save the flight of Time. Mrs. Boulte had never breathed her suspicion to Kurrell, because she was not certain; and her nature led her to be very certain before she took steps in any direction. That is why she behaved as she did.

Boulte came into the house one evening, and leaned against the door-post of the drawing-room, chewing his mustache. Mrs. Boulte was putting some flowers into a vase. There is a pretense of civilization even in Kashima.

"Little woman," said Boulte, quietly, "do you care for me?"

"Immensely," said she, with a laugh. "Can you ask it?"

"But I'm serious," said Boulte. "*Do* you care for me?"

Mrs. Boulte dropped the flowers, and turned round quickly. "Do you want an honest answer?"

"Ye-es; I've asked for it."

Mrs. Boulte spoke in a low, even voice for five minutes, very distinctly that there might be no misunderstanding her meaning. When Samson broke the pillars of Gaza, he did a little thing, and one not to be compared to the deliberate pulling down of a woman's homestead about her own ears. There was no wise female friend to advise Mrs. Boulte, the singularly cautious wife, to hold her hand. She struck at Boulte's heart, because her own was sick with suspicion of Kurrell, and worn out with the long strain of watching alone through the Rains. There was no plan or purpose in her speaking. The sentences made

themselves; and Boulte listened, leaning against the door-post with his hands in his pockets. When all was over, and Mrs. Boulte began to breathe through her nose before breaking out into tears, he laughed and stared straight in front of him at the Dosehri hills.

"Is that all?" he said. "Thanks; I only wanted to know, you know."

"What are you going to do?" said the woman, between her sobs.

"Do! Nothing. What should I do? Kill Kurrell or send you home, or apply for leave to get a divorce? It's two days' dâk into Narkarra." He laughed again and went on: "I'll tell you what *you* can do. You can ask Kurrell to dinner to-morrow—no, on Thursday, that will allow you time to pack—and you can bolt with him. I give you my word, I won't follow."

He took up his helmet and went out of the room, and Mrs. Boulte sat till the moonlight streaked the floor, thinking and thinking and thinking. She had done her best upon the spur of the moment to pull the house down; but it would not fall. Moreover, she could not understand her husband, and she was afraid. Then the folly of her useless truthfulness struck her, and she was ashamed to write to Kurrell, saying: "I have gone mad and told everything. My husband says that I am free to elope with you. Get a dâk for Thursday, and we will fly after dinner." There was a cold-bloodedness about that procedure which did not appeal to her. So she sat still in her own house and thought.

At dinner time Boulte came back from his walk, white and worn and haggard, and the woman was touched at

his distress. As the evening wore on, she muttered some expression of sorrow, something approaching to contrition. Boulte came out of a brown study, and said: "Oh, *that!* I wasn't thinking about that. By the way, what does Kurrell say to the elopement?"

"I haven't seen him," said Mrs. Boulte. "Good God! is that all?"

But Boulte was not listening, and her sentence ended in a gulp.

The next day brought no comfort to Mrs. Boulte, for Kurrell did not appear, and the new life that she, in the five minutes' madness of the previous evening, had hoped to build out of the ruins of the old, seemed to be no nearer.

Boulte ate his breakfast, advised her to see her Arab pony fed in the veranda, and went out. The morning wore through, and at midday the tension became unendurable. Mrs. Boulte could not cry. She had finished her crying in the night, and now she did not want to be left alone. Perhaps the Vansuythen Woman would talk to her; and, since talking opens the heart, perhaps there might be some comfort to be found in her company. She was the only other woman in the Station.

In Kashima there are no regular calling-hours. Every one can drop in upon every one else at pleasure. Mrs. Boulte put on a big terai hat, and walked across to the Vansuythens' house to borrow last week's "Queen." The two compounds touched, and instead of going up the drive, she crossed through the gap in the cactus hedge, entering the house from the back. As she passed through the dining-room, she heard, behind the punkah that

cloaked the drawing-room door, her husband's voice, saying:

"But on my Honor! On my Soul and Honor, I tell you she doesn't care for me. She told me so last night. I would have told you then if Vansuythen hadn't been with you. If it is for *her* sake that you'll have nothing to say to me, you can make your mind easy. It's Kurrell—"

"What?" said Mrs. Vansuythen, with a hysterical little laugh. "Kurrell! Oh, it can't be! You two must have made some horrible mistake. Perhaps you—you lost your temper, or misunderstood, or something. Things *can't* be as wrong as you say."

Mrs. Vansuythen had shifted her defense to avoid the man's pleading, and was desperately trying to keep him to a side issue.

"There must be some mistake," she insisted, "and it can be all put right again."

Boulte laughed grimly.

"It can't be Captain Kurrell! He told me that he had never taken the least—the least interest in your wife, Mr. Boulte. Oh, *do* listen! He said he had not. He swore he had not," said Mrs. Vansuythen.

The purdah rustled, and the speech was cut short by the entry of a little, thin woman, with big rings round her eyes. Mrs. Vansuythen stood up with a gasp.

"What was that you said?" asked Mrs. Boulte. "Never mind that man. What did Ted say to you? What did he say to you? What did he say to you?"

Mrs. Vansuythen sat down helplessly on the sofa, overborne by the trouble of her questioner.

"He said—I can't remember exactly what he said—but

I understood him to say—that is . . . But, really, Mrs. Boulte, isn't it rather a strange question?"

"*Will* you tell me what he said?" repeated Mrs. Boulte. Even a tiger will fly before a bear robbed of her whelps, and Mrs. Vansuythen was only an ordinarily good woman. She began in a sort of desperation: "Well, he said that he never cared for you at all, and, of course, there was not the least reason why he should have, and—and—that was all."

"You said he *swore* he had not cared for me. Was that true?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Vansuythen, very softly.

Mrs. Boulte wavered for an instant where she stood, and then fell forward fainting.

"What did I tell you?" said Boulte, as though the conversation had been unbroken. "You can see for yourself. She cares for *him*." The light began to break into his dull mind, and he went on: "And he—what was *he* saying to you?"

But Mrs. Vansuythen with no heart for explanations or impassioned protestations, was kneeling over Mrs. Boulte.

"Oh, you brute!" she cried. "Are *all* men like this? Help me to get her into my room—and her face is cut against the table. Oh, *will* you be quiet, and help me to carry her? I hate you, and I hate Captain Kurrell. Lift her up carefully, and now—go! Go away!"

Boulte carried his wife into Mrs. Vansuythen's bedroom, and departed before the storm of that lady's wrath and disgust, impenitent and burning with jealousy. Kurrell had been making love to Mrs. Vansuythen—would

do Vansuythen as great a wrong as he had done Boulte, who caught himself considering whether Mrs. Vansuythen would faint if she discovered that the man she loved had foresworn her.

In the middle of these meditations, Kurrell came cantering along the road and pulled up with a cheery: "Good-mornin'. 'Been mashing Mrs. Vansuythen as usual, eh? Bad thing for a sober, married man, that. What will Mrs. Boulte say?"

Boulte raised his head and said, slowly:

"Oh, you liar!" Kurrell's face changed.

"What's that?" he asked, quickly.

"Nothing much," said Boulte. "Has my wife told you that you two are free to go off whenever you please? She has been good enough to explain the situation to me. You've been a true friend to me, Kurrell—old man—haven't you?"

Kurrell groaned, and tried to frame some sort of idiotic sentence about being willing to give "satisfaction." But his interest in the woman was dead, had died out in the Rains, and, mentally, he was abusing her for her amazing indiscretion. It would have been easy to have broken off the *liaison* gently and by degrees, and now he was saddled with . . . Boulte's voice recalled him.

"I don't think I should get any satisfaction from killing you, and I'm pretty sure you'd get none from killing me."

Then in a querulous tone, ludicrously disproportioned to his wrongs, Boulte added:

"'Seems rather a pity that you haven't the decency to

keep to the woman, now you've got her. You've been a true friend to *her* too, haven't you?"

Kurrell stared long and gravely. The situation was getting beyond him.

"What do you mean?" he said.

Boulte answered, more to himself than his questioner: "My wife came over to Mrs. Vansuythen's just now; and it seems you'd been telling Mrs. Vansuythen that you'd never cared for Emma. I suppose you lied, as usual. What had Mrs. Vansuythen to do with you, or you with her? Try to speak the truth for once in a way."

Kurrell took the double insult without wincing, and replied by another question:

"Go on. What happened?"

"Emma fainted," said Boulte, simply. "But, look here, what had you been saying to Mrs. Vansuythen?"

Kurrell laughed. Mrs. Boulte had, with unbridled tongue, made havoc of his plans; and he could at least retaliate by hurting the man in whose eyes he was humiliated and shown dishonorable.

"Said to her? What *does* a man tell a lie like that for? I suppose I said pretty much what you've said, unless I'm a good deal mistaken."

"I spoke the truth," said Boulte, again more to himself than Kurrell. "Emma told me she hated me. She has no right in me."

"No! I suppose not. You're only her husband, y'know. And what did Mrs. Vansuythen say after you had laid your disengaged heart at her feet?"

Kurrell felt almost virtuous as he put the question

"I don't think that matters," Boulte replied; "and it doesn't concern you."

"But it does! I tell you it does," began Kurrell, shamelessly.

The sentence was cut by a roar of laughter from Boulte's lips. Kurrell was silent for an instant, and then he, too, laughed—laughed long and loudly, rocking in his saddle. It was an unpleasant sound—the mirthless mirth of these men on the long, white line of the Narkarra Road. There were no strangers in Kashima, or they might have thought that captivity within the Doschri hills had driven half the European population mad. The laughter stopped abruptly. Kurrell was the first to speak.

"Well, what are you going to do?"

Boulte looked up the road, and at the hills. "Nothing," said he, quietly. "What's the use? It's too ghastly for anything. We must let the old life go on. I can only call you a hound and a liar, and I can't go on calling you names forever. Besides which, I don't feel that I'm much better. We can't get out of this place, y'know. What *is* there to do?"

Kurrell looked round the rat-pit of Kashima, and made no reply. The injured husband took up the wondrous tale.

"Ride on, and speak to Emma if you want to. God knows *I* don't care what you do."

He walked forward, and left Kurrell gazing blankly after him. Kurrell did not ride on either to see Mrs. Boulte or Mrs. Vansuythen. He sat in his saddle and thought, while his pony grazed by the roadside.

The whir of approaching wheels roused him. Mrs. Vansuythen was driving home Mrs. Boulte, white and wan, with a cut on her forehead.

"Stop, please," said Mrs. Boulte; "I want to speak to Ted."

Mrs. Vansuythen obeyed, but as Mrs. Boulte leaned forward, putting her hand upon the splash-board of the dog-cart, Kurrell spoke.

"I've seen your husband, Mrs. Boulte."

There was no necessity for any further explanation. The man's eyes were fixed, not upon Mrs. Boulte, but her companion. Mrs. Boulte saw the look.

"Speak to him!" she pleaded, turning to the woman at her side. "Oh, speak to him! Tell him what you told me just now. Tell him you hate him! Tell him you hate him!"

She bent forward and wept bitterly, while the sais, decorously impassive, went forward to hold the horse. Mrs. Vansuythen turned scarlet and dropped the reins. She wished to be no party to such an unholy explanation.

"I've nothing to do with it," she began, coldly; but Mrs. Boulte's sobs overcame her, and she addressed herself to the man. "I don't know what I am to say, Captain Kurrell. I don't know what I can call you. I think you've—you've behaved abominably, and she has cut her forehead terribly against the table."

"It doesn't hurt. It isn't anything," said Mrs. Boulte, feebly. "*That* doesn't matter. Tell him what you told me. Say you don't care for him. Oh, Ted, *won't* you believe her?"

"Mrs. Boulte has made me understand that you were

—that you were fond of her once upon a time," went on Mrs. Vansuythen.

"Well!" said Kurrell, brutally. "It seems to me that Mrs. Boulte had better be fond of her own husband first."

"Stop!" said Mrs. Vansuythen. "Hear me first. I don't care—I don't want to know anything about you and Mrs. Boulte; but I want *you* to know that I hate you, that I think you are a cur, and that I'll never, *never* speak to you again. Oh, I don't dare to say what I think of you, you . . . man! *Sais, gorah ko jane do.*"

"I want to speak to Ted," moaned Mrs. Boulte; but the dog-cart rattled on, and Kurrell was left on the road, shamed, and boiling with wrath against Mrs. Boulte.

He waited till Mrs. Vansuythen was driving back to her own house, and, she being freed from the embarrassment of Mrs. Boulte's presence, learned for the second time a truthful opinion of himself and his actions.

In the evenings, it was the wont of all Kashima to meet at the platform on the Narkarra Road, to drink tea, and discuss the trivialities of the day. Major Vansuythen and his wife found themselves alone at the gathering-place for almost the first time in their remembrance; and the cheery major, in the teeth of his wife's remarkably reasonable suggestion that the rest of the Station might be sick, insisted upon driving round to the two bungalows and unearthing the population.

"Sitting in the twilight!" said he, with great indignation, to the Boultes. "That'll never do! Hang it all, we're one family here! You *must* come out, and so must Kurrell. I'll make him bring his banjo."

So great is the power of honest simplicity and a good

digestion over guilty consciences that all Kashima did turn out, even down to the banjo; and the Major embraced the company in one expansive grin. As he grinned, Mrs. Vansuythen raised her eyes for an instant and looked at Kashima. Her meaning was clear. Major Vansuythen would never know anything. He was to be the outsider in that happy family whose cage was the Dosehri hills.

"You're singing villainously out of tune, Kurrell," said the Major, truthfully. "Pass me that banjo."

And he sung in excruciating-wise till the stars came out and Kashima went to dinner.

* * * * * * *

That was the beginning of the New Life of Kashima—the life that Mrs. Boulte made when her tongue was loosened in the twilight.

Mrs. Vansuythen has never told the Major; and since he insists upon the maintenance of a burdensome geniality, she has been compelled to break her vow of not speaking to Kurrell. This speech, which must of necessity preserve the semblance of politeness and interest, serves admirably to keep alight the flame of jealousy and dull hatred in Boulte's bosom, as it awakens the same passions in his wife's heart. Mrs. Boulte hates Mrs. Vansuythen because she has taken Ted from her, and, in some curious fashion, hates her because Mrs. Vansuythen—and here the wife's eyes see far more clearly than the husband's—detests Ted. And Ted—that gallant captain and honorable man—knows now that it is possible to love a woman once loved, even to the verge of wishing to

silence her forever with blows. Above all is he shocked that Mrs. Boulte can not see the error of her ways.

Boulte and he go out tiger-shooting together in amity and all good friendship. Boulte has put their relationship on a most satisfactory footing.

"You're a blackguard," he says to Kurrell, "and I've lost any self-respect I may ever have had; but when you're with me, I can feel certain that you are not with Mrs. Vansuythen, or making Emma miserable."

Kurrell endures anything that Boulte may say to him. Sometimes they are away for three days together, and then the Major insists upon his wife going over to sit with Mrs. Boulte; although Mrs. Vansuythen has repeatedly avowed that she prefers her husband's company to any in the world. From the way in which she clings to him, she would certainly appear to be speaking the truth.

But of course, as the Major says, "in a little Station we must all be friendly."

THE ENLIGHTENMENTS OF PAGETT, M. P.

"Because half a dozen gras-hoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, while thousands of great cattle repose beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field—that, of course, they are many in number—or that, after all, they are other than the little, shriveled, meager, hopping, though loud and troublesome, insects of the hour."
—BURKE: "*Reflections on the Revolution in France.*"

They were sitting in the veranda of "the splendid palace of an Indian Pro-Consul"; surrounded by all the glory and mystery of the immemorial East. In plain English, it was a one-storied, ten-roomed, whitewashed, mud-roofed bungalow, set in a dry garden of dusty tamarisk trees and divided from the road by a low mud wall. The green parrots screamed overhead as they flew in battalions to the river for their morning drink. Beyond the wall, clouds of fine dust showed where the cattle and goats of the city were passing afield to graze. The remorseless white light of the winter sunshine of Northern India lay upon everything and improved nothing, from the whining Persian-wheel by the lawn tennis court to the long perspective of level road and the blue, domed tombs of Mohammedan saints just visible above the trees.

"A Happy New Year," said Orde to his guest. "It's the first you've ever spent out of England, isn't it?"

"Yes. Happy New Year," said Pagett, smiling at the sunshine. "What a divine climate you have here! Just think of the brown cold fog hanging over London now!" And he rubbed his hands.

It was more than twenty years since he had last seen Orde, his schoolmate, and their paths in the world had divided early. The one had quitted college to become a cog-wheel in the machinery of the great Indian Government; the other, more blessed with goods, had been whirled into a similar position in the English scheme. Three successive elections had not affected Pagett's position with a loyal constituency, and he had grown insensibly to regard himself in some sort as a pillar of the Empire, whose real worth would be known later on. After a few years of conscientious attendance at many divisions, after newspaper battles innumerable, and the publication of interminable correspondence, and more hasty oratory than in his calmer moments he cared to think upon, it occurred to him, as it had occurred to many of his fellows in Parliament, that a tour to India would enable him to sweep a larger lyre and address himself to the problems of Imperial administration with a firmer hand. Accepting, therefore, a general invitation extended to him by Orde some years before, Pagett had taken ship to Karachi, and only over-night had been received with joy by the Deputy-Commissioner of Amara. They had sat late, discussing the changes and chances of twenty years, recalling the names of the dead, and weigh-

ing the futures of the living, as is the custom of men meeting after intervals of action.

Next morning they smoked the after-breakfast pipe in the veranda, still regarding each other curiously. Pagett in a light gray frock-coat and garments much too thin for the time of the year, and a puggried sun-hat carefully and wonderfully made. Orde in a shooting coat, riding breeches, brown cowhide boots with spurs, and a battered flax helmet. He had ridden some miles in the early morning to inspect a doubtful river dam. The men's faces differed as much as their attire. Orde's, worn and wrinkled about the eyes and grizzled at the temples, was the harder and more square of the two, and it was with something like envy that the owner looked at the comfortable outlines of Pagett's blandly receptive countenance, the clear skin, the untroubled eye, and the mobile, clean-shaved lips.

"And this is India!" said Pagett for the twentieth time, staring long and intently at the gray feathering of the tamarisks.

"One portion of India only. It's very much like this for 300 miles in every direction. By the way, now that you have rested a little—I wouldn't ask the old question before—what d'you think of the country?"

"'Tis the most pervasive country that ever yet was seen. I acquired several pounds of your country coming up from Karachi. The air is heavy with it, and for miles and miles along that dismal coastline of India there's no horizon to show where air and earth separate."

"Yes. It isn't easy to see true or far in India. But you had a decent passage out, hadn't you?"

"Very good on the whole. Your Anglo-Indian may be unsympathetic about one's political views; but he has reduced ship life to a science."

"The Anglo-Indian is a political orphan, and if he's wise he won't be in a hurry to be adopted by your party grandmothers. But how were your companions—unsympathetic?"

"Well, there was a man called Dawlishe, a judge somewhere in this country, it seems, and a capital partner at whist, by the way; and when I wanted to talk to him about the progress of India in a political sense (Orde had a grin, which might or might not have been sympathetic), the National Congress movement, and other things in which, as a Member of Parliament, I'm of course interested, he shifted the subject, and when I once cornered him, he looked me calmly in the eye, and said: 'That's all Tommy Rot. Come and have a game at Bull.' You may laugh; but that isn't the way to treat a great and important question; and, knowing who I was, well, I thought it rather rude, don't you know; and yet Dawlishe is a thoroughly good fellow."

"Yes; he's a friend of mine, and one of the straightest men I know. I suppose, like many Anglo-Indians, he felt it was hopeless to give you any just idea of any Indian question without the documents before you, and in this case the documents you want are the country and the people."

"Precisely. That was why I came straight to you, bringing an open mind to bear on things. I'm anxious to know what popular feeling in India is really like, y'know, now that it has wakened into political life. The

National Congress, in spite of Dawlishe, must have caused great excitement among the masses?"

"On the contrary, nothing could be more tranquil than the state of popular feeling; and as to excitement, the people would as soon be excited over the 'Rule of Three' as over the Congress."

"Excuse me, Orde, but do you think you are a fair judge? Isn't the official Anglo-Indian naturally jealous of any external influences that might move the masses, and so much opposed to liberal ideas, truly liberal ideas, that he can scarcely be expected to regard a popular movement with fairness?"

"What did Dawlishe say about Tommy Rot? Think a moment, old man. You and I were brought up together; taught by the same tutors, read the same books, lived the same life, and thought, as you may remember, in parallel lines. *I* come out here, learn new languages, and work among new races; while you, more fortunate, remain at home. Why should I change my mind—our mind—because I change my sky? Why should I and the few hundred Englishmen in my service become unreasonable, prejudiced fossils, while you and your newer friends alone remain bright and open-minded? You surely don't fancy civilians are members of a Primrose League?"

"Of course not, but the mere position of an English official gives him a point of view which can not but bias his mind on this question." Pagett moved his knee up and down a little uneasily as he spoke.

"That sounds plausible enough, but, like more plausible notions on Indian matters, I believe it's a mistake. You'll

find when you come to consult the unofficial Briton that our fault, as a class—I speak of the civilian now—is rather to magnify the progress that has been made toward liberal institutions. It is of English origin, such as it is, and the stress of our work since the Mutiny—only thirty years ago—has been in that direction. No, I think you will get no fairer or more dispassionate view of the Congress business than such men as I can give you. But I may as well say at once that those who know most of India, from the inside, are inclined to wonder at the noise our scarcely begun experiment makes in England."

"But surely the gathering together of Congress delegates is of itself a new thing."

"There's nothing new under the sun. When Europe was a jungle half Asia flocked to the canonical conferences of Buddhism; and for centuries the people have gathered at Puri, Hurdwar, Trimbak, and Benares in immense numbers. A great meeting, what you call a mass meeting, is really one of the oldest and most popular of Indian institutions. In the case of the Congress meetings, the only notable fact is that the priests of the altar are British, not Buddhist, Jain or Brahmanical, and that the whole thing is a British contrivance kept alive by the efforts of Messrs. Hume, Eardley Norton, and Digby."

"You mean to say, then, it's not a spontaneous movement?"

"What movement was ever spontaneous in any true sense of the word? This seems to be more factitious than usual. You seem to know a great deal about it; try it by the touchstone of subscriptions, a coarse but fairly trustworthy criterion, and there is scarcely the color of

money in it. The delegates write from England that they are out of pocket for working expenses, railway fares, and stationery—the mere pasteboard and scaffolding of their show. It is, in fact, collapsing from mere financial inanition."

"But you can not deny that the people of Indian, who are perhaps too poor to subscribe, are mentally and morally moved by the agitation," Pagett insisted.

"That is precisely what I *do* deny. The native side of the movement is the work of a limited class, a microscopic minority, as Lord Dufferin described it, when compared with the people proper, but still a very interested class, seeing that it is of our own creation. It is composed almost entirely of those of the literary or clerkly castes who have received an English education."

"Surely that's a very important class. Its members must be the ordained leaders of popular thought."

"Anywhere else they might be leaders, but they have no social weight in this topsy-turvy land, and though they have been employed in clerical work for generations they have no practical knowledge of affairs. A ship's clerk is a useful person, but he is scarcely the captain; and an orderly room writer, however smart he may be, is not the colonel. You see, the writer class in India has never till now aspired to anything like command. It wasn't allowed to. The Indian gentleman, for thousands of years past, has resembled Victor Hugo's noble:

> " 'Un vrai sire
> Chatelain
> Laisse ecrire
> Le vilian.

Sa main digne
Quand il signe
Egratigne
Le velin.'

And the little *egratignures* he most likes to make have been scored pretty deeply by the sword."

"But this is childish and mediaeval nonsense!"

"Precisely; and from your, or rather our, point of view the pen *is* mightier than the sword. In this country it's otherwise. The fault lies in our Indian balances, not yet adjusted to civilized weights and measures."

"Well, at all events, this literary class represents the natural aspirations and wishes of the people at large, though it may not exactly lead them, and in spite of all you say, Orde, I defy you to find a really sound English Radical who would not sympathize with those aspirations."

Pagett spoke with some warmth, and he had scarcely ceased when a well-appointed dog-cart turned into the compound gates, and Orde rose, saying:

"Here is Edwards, the Master of the Lodge I neglect so diligently, come to talk about accounts, I suppose."

As the vehicle drove up under the porch Pagett also rose, saying with the trained effusion born of much practice:

"But this is also *my* friend, my old and valued friend Edwards. I'm delighted to see you. I knew you were in India, but not exactly where."

"Then it isn't accounts, Mr. Edwards," said Orde, cheerily.

"Why no, sir; I heard Mr. Pagett was coming, and as

our works were closed for the New Year I thought I would drive over and see him."

"A very happy thought. Mr. Edwards, you may not know Orde was a leading member of our Radical Club at Switchton when I was beginning political life, and I owe much to his exertions. There's no pleasure like meeting an old friend, except, perhaps, making a new one. I suppose, Mr. Edwards, you stick to the good old cause?"

"Well, you see, sir, things are different out here. There's precious little one can find to say against the Government, which was the main of our talk at home, and them that do say things are not the sort o' people a man who respects himself would like to be mixed up with. There are no politics, in a manner of speaking, in India. It's all work."

"Surely you are mistaken, my good friend. Why I have come all the way from England just to see the working of this great National movement."

"I don't know where you're going to find the nation as moves to begin with, and then you'll be hard put to it to find what they are moving about. It's like this, sir," said Edwards, who had not quite relished being called "my good friend." "They haven't got any grievance – nothing to hit with, don't you see, sir; and then there's not much to hit against, because the Government is more like a kind of general Providence, directing an old established state of things, than that at home, where there's something new thrown down for us to fight about every three months."

"You are probably, in your workshops, full of English

mechanics, out of the way of learning what the masses think."

"I don't know so much about that. There are four of us English foremen, and between seven and eight hundred native fitters, smiths, carpenters, painters, and such like."

"And they are full of the Congress, of course?"

"Never hear a word of it from year's end to year's end, and I speak the talk, too. But I wanted to ask how things are going on at home—old Tyler and Brown and the rest?"

"We will speak of them presently, but your account of the indifference of your men surprises me almost as much as your own. I fear you are a backslider from the good old doctrine, Edwards." Pagett spoke as one who mourned the death of a near relative.

"Not a bit, sir, but I should be if I took up with a parcel of baboos, pleaders, and schoolboys, as never did a day's work in their lives, and couldn't if they tried. And if you was to poll us English railway-men, mechanics, tradespeople, and the like of that all up and down the country from Peshawur to Calcutta, you would find us mostly in a rule together. And yet you know we're the same English you pay some respect to at home at election time, and we have the pull o' knowing something about it."

"This is very curious, but you let me come and see you, and perhaps you will kindly show me the railway works, and we will talk things over at leisure. And about all old friends and old times," added Pagett, detecting with quick insight a look of disappointment in the mechanic's face.

Nodding briefly to Orde, Edwards mounted his dog-cart and drove off.

"It's very disappointing," said the Member to Orde, who, while his friend discoursed with Edwards, had been looking over a bundle of sketches drawn on grey paper in purple ink, and brought to him by a Chuprassee.

"Don't let it trouble you, old chap," said Orde, sympathetically. "Look here a moment, here are some sketches by the man who made the carved wood screen you admired so much in the dining-room, and wanted a copy of, and the artist himself is here too."

"A native?" said Pagett.

"Of course," was the reply, "Bishen Singh is his name, and he has two brothers to help him. When there is an important job to do, the three go into partnership, but they spend most of their time and all their money in litigation over an inheritance, and I'm afraid they are getting involved. Thoroughbred Sikhs of the old rock, obstinate, touchy, bigoted, and cunning, but good men for all that. Here is Bishen Singh—shall we ask *him* about the Congress?"

But Bishen Singh, who approached with a respectful salaam, has never heard of it and he listened with a puzzled face and obviously feigned interest to Orde's account of its aims and objects, finally shaking his vast white turban with great significance when he learned that it was promoted by certain pleaders named by Orde, and by educated natives. He began with labored respect to explain how he was a poor man with no concern in such matters, which were all under the control of God, but presently broke out of Urdu into familiar Punjabi,

the mere sound of which had a rustic smack of village smoke reek and plough tail, as he denounced the wearers of white coats, the jugglers with words who filched his field from him, the men whose backs were never bowed by honest work; and poured ironical scorn on the Bengali. He and one of his brothers had seen Calcutta, and being at work there had Bengali carpenters given to them as assistants.

"Those carpenters!" said Bishen Singh. "Black apes were more efficient workmates, and as for the Bengali babu—tchick!" The guttural click needed no interpretation, but Orde translated the rest, while Pagett gazed with interest at the wood-carver.

"He seems to have a most illiberal prejudice against the Bengali," said the M. P.

"Yes, it's very sad that for ages outside Bengal there should be so bitter a prejudice. Pride of race, which also means race-hatred, is the plague and curse of India and it spreads far," Orde pointed with his riding-whip to the large map of India on the veranda wall.

"See! I begin with the North," said he. "There's the Afghan, and, as a highlander, he despises all the dwellers in Hindoostan—with the exception of the Sikh, whom he hates as cordially as the Sikh hates him. The Hindu loathes Sikh and Afghan, and the Rajput—that's a little lower down across this yellow blot of desert—has a strong objection, to put it mildly, to the Maratha, who, by the way, poisonously hates the Afghan. Let's go North a minute. The Sindhi hates everybody I've mentioned. Very good, we'll take less warlike races. The cultivator of Northern India domineers over the man in the next

province, and the Behari of the Northwest ridicules the Bengali. They are all at one on that point. I'm giving you merely the roughest possible outlines of the facts, of course."

Bishen Singh, his clean-cut nostrils still quivering, watched the large sweep of the whip as it traveled from the frontier, through Sindh, the Punjab and Rajputana, till it rested by the valley of the Jumna.

"Hate—eternal and inextinguishable hate," concluded Orde, flicking the lash of the whip across the large map from East to West as he sat down. "Remember Canning's advice to Lord Granville, 'Never write or speak of Indian things without looking at a map.'"

Pagett opened his eyes, Orde resumed. "And the race-hatred is only a part of it. What's really the matter with Bishen Singh is class-hatred, which, unfortunately, is even more intense and more widely spread. That's one of the little drawbacks of caste, which some of your recent English writers find an impeccable system."

The wood carver was glad to be recalled to the business of his craft, and his eyes shone as he received instructions for a carved wooden doorway for Pagett, which he promised should be splendidly executed and dispatched to England in six months. It is an irrelevant detail, but in spite of Orde's reminders, fourteen months elapsed before the work was finished. Business over, Bishen Singh hung about, reluctant to take his leave, and at last, joining his hands and approaching Orde with bated breath and whispering humbleness, said he had a petition to make. Orde's face suddenly lost all trace of

expression. "Speak on, Bishen Singh," said he, and the carver in a whining tone explained that his case against his brothers was fixed for hearing before a native judge and—here he dropped his voice still lower till he was summarily stopped by Orde, who sternly pointed to the gate with an emphatic Begone!

Bishen Singh, showing but little sign of discomposure, salaamed respectfully to the friends and departed.

Pagett looked inquiry; Orde with complete recovery of his usual urbanity, replied: "It's nothing, only the old story, he wants his case to be tried by an English judge—they all do that—but when he began to hint that the other side were in improper relations with the native judge I had to shut him up. Gunga Ram, the man he wanted to make insinuations about, may not be very bright; but he's as honest as daylight on the bench. But that's just what one can't get a native to believe."

"Do you really mean to say these people prefer to have their cases tried by English judges?"

"Why, certainly."

Pagett drew a long breath. "I didn't know that before." At this point a phaeton entered the compound, and Orde rose with "Confound it, there's old Rasul Ali Khan come to pay one of his tiresome duty-calls. I'm afraid we shall never get through our little Congress discussion."

Pagett was an almost silent spectator of the grave formalities of a visit paid by a punctilious old Mohammedan gentleman to an Indian official; and was much impressed by the distinction of manner and fine appearance of the Mohammedan landholder. When the exchange of polite

banalities came to a pause, he expressed a wish to learn the courtly visitor's opinion of the National Congress.

Orde reluctantly interpreted, and with a smile which even Mohammedan politeness could not save from bitter scorn, Rasul Ali Khan intimated that he knew nothing about it and cared still less. It was a kind of talk encouraged by the Government for some mysterious purpose of its own, and for his own part he wondered and held his peace.

Pagett was far from satisfied with this, and wished to have the old gentleman's opinion on the propriety of managing all Indian affairs on the basis of an elective system.

Orde did his best to explain, but it was plain the visitor was bored and bewildered. Frankly, he didn't think much of committees: they had a Municipal Committee at Lahore and had elected a menial servant, an orderly, as a member. He had been informed of this on good authority, and after that committees had ceased to interest him. But all was according to the rule of Government, and, please God, it was all for the best.

"What an old fossil it is!" cried Pagett, as Orde returned from seeing his guest to the door; "just like some old blue-blooded hidalgo of Spain. What does he really think of the Congress after all, and of the elective system?"

"Hates it like poison. When you are sure of a majority, election is a fine system; but you can scarcely expect the Mohammedans, the most masterful and powerful minority in the country, to contemplate their own extinction with joy. The worst of it is that he and

his co-religionists, who are many, and the landed proprietors, also of Hindu race, are frightened and put out by this election business and by the importance we have bestowed on lawyers, pleaders, writers and the like, who have, up to now, been in abject submission to them. They say little, but after all they are the most important faggots in the great bundle of communities, and all the glib bunkum in the world would not pay for their estrangement. They have controlled the land."

"But I am assured that experience of local self-government in your municipalities has been most satisfactory, and when once the principle is accepted in your centres, don't you know, it is bound to spread, and these important —ah'm—people of yours would learn it like the rest. I see no difficulty at all," and the smooth lips closed with the complacent snap habitual to Pagett, M. P., the "man of cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows."

Orde looked at him with a dreary smile.

"The privilege of election has been most reluctantly withdrawn from scores of municipalities, others have had to be summarily suppressed, and, outside the Presidency towns, the actual work done has been badly performed. This is of less moment, perhaps—it only sends up the local death-rates—than the fact that the public interest in municipal elections, never very strong, has waned, and is waning, in spite of careful nursing on the part of Government servants."

"Can you explain this lack of interest?" said Pagett, putting aside the rest of Orde's remarks.

"You may find a ward of the key in the fact that only one in every thousand of our population can spell. Then

they are infinitely more interested in religion and caste questions than in any sort of politics. When the business of mere existence is over, their minds are occupied by a series of interests, pleasures, rituals, superstitions, and the like, based on centuries of tradition and usage. You, perhaps, find it hard to conceive of people absolutely devoid of curiosity, to whom the book, the daily paper, and the printed speech are unknown, and you would describe their life as blank. That's a profound mistake. You are in another land, another century, down on the bed-rock of society, where the family merely, and not the community, is all-important. The average Oriental cannot be brought to look beyond his clan. His life, too, is more complete and self-sufficing, and less sordid and low-thoughted than you might imagine. It is bovine and slow in some respects, but it is never empty. You and I are inclined to put the cart before the horse, and to forget that it is the man that is elemental, not the book.

" 'The corn and the cattle are all my care,
And the rest is the will of God.'

Why should such folk look up from their immemorially appointed round of duty and interests to meddle with the unknown and fuss with voting papers? How would you, atop of all your interests, care to conduct even one tenth of your life according to the manners and customs of the Papuans, let's say? That's what it comes to."

"But if they won't take the trouble to vote, why do you anticipate that Mohammedans, proprietors, and the rest would be crushed by majorities of them?"

Again Pagett disregarded the closing sentence.

"Because, though the landholders would not move a finger on any purely political question, they could be raised in dangerous excitement by religious hatreds. Already the first note of this has been sounded by the people who are trying to get up an agitation on the cow-killing question, and every year there is trouble over the Mohammedan Muharrum processions."

"But who looks after the popular rights, being thus unrepresented?"

"The Government of Her Majesty the Queen, Empress of India, in which, if the Congress promoters are to be believed, the people have implicit trust; for the Congress circular, specially prepared for rustic comprehension, says the movement is '*for the remission of tax, the advancement of Hindustan, and the strengthening of the British Government.*' This paper is headed in large letters—'MAY THE PROSPERITY OF THE EMPRESS OF INDIA ENDURE.'"

"Really!" said Pagett, "that shows some cleverness. But there are things better worth imitation in our English methods of—er—political statement than this sort of amiable fraud."

"Anyhow," resumed Orde, "you perceive that not a word is said about elections and the elective principle, and the reticence of the Congress promoters here shows they are wise in their generation."

"But the elective principle must triumph in the end, and the little difficulties you seem to anticipate would give way on the introduction of a well-balanced scheme, capable of indefinite extension."

"But is it possible to devise a scheme which, always assuming that the people took any interest in it, without

enormous expense, ruinous dislocation of the administration and danger to the public peace, can satisfy the aspirations of Mr. Hume and his following, and yet safeguard the interests of the Mohammedans, the landed and wealthy classes, the Conservative Hindus, the Eurasians, Parsees, Sikhs, Rajputs, native Christians, domiciled Europeans and others, who are each important and powerful in their way?"

Pagett's attention, however, was diverted to the gate, where a group of cultivators stood in apparent hesitation.

"Here are the twelve Apostles, by Jove!—come straight out of Raffaele's cartoons," said the M. P., with the fresh appreciation of a newcomer.

Orde, loath to be interrupted, turned impatiently towards the villagers, and their leader, handing his long staff to one of his companions, advanced to the house.

"It is old Jelloo, the Lumberdar, or head-man of Pind Sharkot, and a very intelligent man for a villager."

The Jat farmer had removed his shoes and stood smiling on the edge of the veranda. His strongly marked features glowed with russet bronze, and his bright eyes gleamed under deeply set brows, contracted by life-long exposure to sunshine. His beard and moustache streaked with grey swept from bold cliffs of brow and cheek in the large sweeps one sees drawn by Michael Angelo, and strands of long black hair mingled with the irregularly piled wreaths and folds of his turban. The drapery of stout blue cotton cloth thrown over his broad shoulders and girt round his narrow loins, hung from his tall form in broadly sculptured folds, and he would have made a superb model for an artist in search of a patriarch.

Orde greeted him cordially, and after a polite pause the countryman started off with a long story told with impressive earnestness. Orde listened and smiled, interrupting the speaker at times to argue and reason with him in a tone which Pagett could hear was kindly, and finally checking the flux of words was about to dismiss him, when Pagett suggested that he should be asked about the National Congress.

But Jelloo had never heard of it. He was a poor man, and such things, by the favour of his Honour, did not concern him.

"What's the matter with your big friend that he was so terribly in earnest?" asked Pagett, when he had left.

"Nothing much. He wants the blood of the people in the next village, who have had small-pox and cattle plague pretty badly, and by the help of a wizard, a currier, and several pigs have passed it on to his own village. 'Wants to know if they can't be run in for this awful crime. It seems they made a dreadful charivari at the village boundary, threw a quantity of spell-bearing objects over the border, a buffalo's skull and other things; then branded a *chamar*—what you would call a currier—on his hinder parts and drove him and a number of pigs over into Jelloo's village. Jelloo says he can bring evidence to prove that the wizard directing these proceedings, who is a Sansi, had been guilty of theft, arson, cattle killing, perjury and murder, but would prefer to have him punished for bewitching them and inflicting small-pox."

"And how on earth did you answer such a lunatic?"

"Lunatic! the old fellow is as sane as you or I; and he

has some ground of complaint against those Sansis. I asked if he would like a native superintendent of police with some men to make inquiries, but he objected on the grounds the police were rather worse than small-pox and criminal tribes put together."

"Criminal tribes—er—I don't quite understand," said Pagett.

"We have in India many tribes of people who in the slack anti-British days became robbers, in various kind, and preyed on the people. They are being restrained and reclaimed little by little, and in time will become useful citizens, but they still cherish hereditary traditions of crime, and are a difficult lot to deal with. By the way, what about the political rights of these folk under your schemes? The country people call them vermin, but I suppose they would be electors with the rest."

"Nonsense—special provision would be made for them in a well-considered electoral scheme, and they would doubtless be treated with fitting severity," said Pagett, with a magisterial air.

"Severity, yes—but whether it would be fitting is doubtful. Even those poor devils have rights, and, after all, they only practice what they have been taught."

"But criminals, Orde!"

"Yes, criminals with codes and rituals of crime, gods and godlings of crime, and a hundred songs and sayings in praise of it. Puzzling, isn't it?"

"It's simply dreadful. They ought to be put down at once. Are there many of them?"

"Not more than about sixty thousand in this province, for many of the tribes broadly described as criminal are

really vagabond and criminal only on occasion, while others are being settled and reclaimed. They are of great antiquity, a legacy from the past, the golden, glorious Aryan past of Max Müller, Birdwood and the rest of your spin-drift philosophers."

An orderly brought a card to Orde, who took it with a movement of irritation at the interruption, and handed it to Pagett; a large card with a ruled border in red ink, and in the center in schoolboy copper plate, *Mr. Dina Nath.* "Give salaam," said the civilian, and there entered in haste a slender youth, clad in a closely fitting coat of grey homespun, tight trousers, patent-leather shoes, and a small black velvet cap. His thin cheek twitched, and his eyes wandered restlessly, for the young man was evidently nervous and uncomfortable, though striving to assume a free and easy air.

"Your honor may perhaps remember me," he said in English, and Orde scanned him keenly.

"I know your face somehow. You belonged to the Shershah district I think, when I was in charge there?"

"Yes, sir, my father is writer at Shershah, and your Honour gave me a prize when I was first in the Middle School examination five years ago. Since then I have prosecuted my studies, and I am now second year's student in the Mission College."

"Of course; you are Kedar Nath's son—the boy who said he liked geography better than play or sugar cakes, and I didn't believe you. How is your father getting on?"

"He is well, and he sends his salaam, but his circumstances are depressed, and he also is down on his luck."

"You learn English idioms at the Mission College, it seems."

"Yes, sir, they are the best idioms, and my father ordered me to ask your honour to say a word for him to the present incumbent of your honour's shoes, the latchet of which he is not worthy to open, and who knows not Joseph; for things are different at Shershah now, and my father wants promotion."

"Your father is a good man, and I will do what I can for him."

At this point a telegram was handed to Orde, who, after glancing at it, said he must leave his young friend whom he introduced to Pagett, "a member of the English House of Commons who wishes to learn about India."

Orde had scarcely retired with his telegram when Pagett began:

"Perhaps you can tell me something of the National Congress movement?"

"Sir, it is the greatest movement of modern times, and one in which all educated men like us *must* join. All our students are for the Congress."

"Excepting, I suppose, Mohammedans, and the Christians?" said Pagett, quick to use his recent instruction.

"These are some *more* exceptions to the universal rule."

"But the people outside the College, the working classes, the agriculturists; your father and mother, for instance."

"My mother," said the young man, with a visible effort to bring himself to pronounce the word, "has no ideas, and my father is not agriculturist, nor working class; he is of the Kayeth caste; but he had not the advantage of a

collegiate education, and he does not know much of the Congress. It is a movement for the educated young-man"—connecting adjective and noun, in a sort of vocal hyphen.

"Ah, yes," said Pagett, feeling he was a little off the rails, "and what are the benefits you expect to gain by it?"

"Oh, sir, everything. England owes its greatness to Parliamentary institutions, and we should *at once* gain the same high position in scale of nations. Sir, we wish to have the sciences, the arts, the manufactures, the industrial factories, with steam engines, and other motive powers, and public meetings, and debates. Already we have a debating club in connection with the college, and elect a Mr. Speaker. Sir, the progress *must* come. You are also a Member of Parliament and worship the great Lord Ripon," said the youth, breathlessly, and his black eyes flashed as he finished his commaless sentences.

"Well," said Pagett, drily, "it has not yet occurred to me to worship his Lordship, although I believe he is a very worthy man, and I am not sure that England owes quite all the things you name to the House of Commons. You see, my young friend, the growth of a nation like ours is slow, subject to many influences, and if you have read your history aright——"

"Sir, I know it all—all!" Norman Conquest, Magna Charta, Runnymede, Reformation, Tudors, Stuarts, Mr. Milton and Mr. Burke, and I have read something of Mr. Herbert Spencer and Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall,' Reynolds' 'Mysteries of Court,' and——"

Pagett felt like one who had pulled the string of a

shower-bath unawares, and hastened to stop the torrent with a question as to what particular grievances of the people of India the attention of an elected assembly should be first directed. But young Mr. Dina Nath was slow to particularise. There were many, very many, demanding consideration. Mr. Pagett would like to hear of one or two typical examples. The Repeal of the Arms Act was at last named, and the student learned for the first time that a license was necessary before an Englishman could carry a gun in England. Then natives of India ought to be allowed to become Volunteer Riflemen if they chose, and the absolute equality of the Oriental with his European fellow subject in civil status should be proclaimed on principle, and the Indian Army should be considerably reduced. The student was not, however, prepared with answers to Mr. Pagett's mildest questions on these points, and he returned to vague generalities, leaving the M.P. so much impressed with the crudity of his views that he was glad on Orde's return to say good-bye to his "very interesting" young friend.

"What do you think of young India?" asked Orde.

"Curious, very curious—and callow."

"And yet," the civilian replied, "one can scarcely help sympathising with him for his mere youth's sake. The young orators of the Oxford Union arrived at the same conclusions and showed doubtless just the same enthusiasm. If there were any political analogy between India and England, if the thousand races of this Empire were one, if there were any chance even of their learning to speak one language, if, in short, India were a Utopia of the debating-room, and not a real land, this kind of talk

might be worth listening to, but it is all based on false analogy and ignorance of the facts."

"He is a sort of English schoolboy, but married three years and the father of two weaklings, and knows less than most English schoolboys. You saw all he is and knows, and such ideas as he has acquired are directly hostile to the most cherished convictions of the vast majority of the people."

"But what does he mean by saying that he is a student of a mission college? Is he a Christian?"

"He meant just what he said, and he is not a Christian, nor ever will he be. Good people in America, Scotland, and England, most of whom would never dream of collegiate education for their own sons, are pinching themselves to bestow it in pure waste on Indian youths. Their scheme is an oblique, subterranean attack on heathenism; the theory being that with the jam of secular education, leading to a University degree, the pill of moral or religious instruction may be coaxed down the heathen gullet."

"But does it succeed; do they make converts?"

"They make no converts, for the subtle Oriental swallows the jam and rejects the pill; but the mere example of the sober, righteous, and godly lives of the principals and professors, who are most excellent and devoted men, must have a certain moral value. Yet, as Lord Lansdowne pointed out the other day, the market is dangerously overstocked with graduates of our Universities who look for employment in the administration. An immense number are employed, but year by year the college mills grind out increasing lists of youths foredoomed to failure

and disappointment; and meanwhile, trade, manufactures, and the industrial arts are neglected, and in fact regarded with contempt by our new literary mandarins *in posse*."

"But our young friend said he wanted steam-engines and factories," said Pagett.

"Yes, he would like to direct such concerns. He wants to begin at the top, for manual labor is held to be discreditable, and he would never defile his hands by the apprenticeship which the architects, engineers, and manufacturers of England cheerfully undergo; and he would be aghast to learn that the leading names of industrial enterprise in England belonged a generation or two since, or now belong, to men who wrought with their own hands. And, though he talks glibly of manufacturers, he refuses to see that the Indian manufacturer of the future will be the despised workman of the present. It was proposed, for example, a few weeks ago, that a certain municipality in this province should establish an elementary technical school for the sons of workmen. The stress of the opposition to the plan came from a pleader who owed all he had to a college education bestowed on him gratis by Government and missions. You would have fancied some fine old crusted Tory squire of the last generation was speaking. 'These people,' he said, 'want no education, for they learn their trades from their fathers, and to teach a workman's son the elements of mathematics and physical science would give him ideas above his business. They must be kept in their place, and it was idle to imagine that there was any science in wood or iron work.' And he carried his point. But the Indian workman will rise in the social scale in spite of the new literary caste."

"In England we have scarcely begun to realise that there is an industrial class in this country; yet, I suppose, the example of men, like Edwards for instance, must tell," said Pagett, thoughtfully.

"That you shouldn't know much about it is natural enough, for there are but few sources of information. India in this, as in other respects, is like a badly kept ledger—not written up to date. And men like Edwards are, in reality, missionaries, who by precept and example are teaching more lessons than they know. Only a few, however, of their crowds of subordinates seem to care to try to emulate them, and aim at individual advancement; the rest drop into the ancient Indian caste groove."

"How do you mean?" asked Pagett.

"Well, it is found that the new railway and factory workmen, the fitter, the smith, the engine-driver, and the rest, are already forming separate hereditary castes. You may notice this down at Jamalpur in Bengal, one of the oldest railway centres; and at other places, and in other industries, they are following the same inexorable Indian law."

"Which means——?" queried Pagett.

"It means that the rooted habit of the people is to gather in small self-contained, self-sufficing family groups with no thought or care for any interests but their own—a habit which is scarcely compatible with the right acceptation of the elective principle."

"Yet you must admit, Orde, that though our young friend was not able to expound the faith that is in him, your Indian army is too big."

"Not nearly big enough for its main purpose. And

as a side issue, there are certain powerful minorities of fighting folk whose interests an Asiatic Government is bound to consider. Arms is as much a means of livelihood as civil employ under Government and law. And it would be a heavy strain on British bayonets to hold down Sikhs, Jats, Bilochis, Rohillas, Rajputs, Bhils, Dogras, Pathans, and Gurkhas to abide by the decisions of a numerical majority opposed to their interests. Leave the 'numerical majority' to itself without the British bayonets—a flock of sheep might as reasonably hope to manage a troop of collies.

"This complaint about excessive growth of the army is akin to another contention of the Congress party. They protest against the malversation of the whole of the moneys raised by additional taxes as a Famine Insurance Fund to other purposes. You must be aware that this special Famine Fund has all been spent on frontier roads and defences and strategic railway schemes as a protection against Russia.

"But there was never a special Famine Fund raised by special taxation and put by as in a box. No sane administrator would dream of such a thing. In a time of prosperity a finance minister, rejoicing in a margin, proposed to annually apply a million and a half to the construction of railways and canals for the protection of districts liable to scarcity, and to the reduction of the annual loans for public works. But times were not always prosperous, and the finance minister had to choose whether he would hang up the insurance scheme for a year or impose fresh taxation. When a farmer hasn't got the little surplus he hoped to have for buying a new waggon and draining a

low-lying field corner, you don't accuse him of malversation if he spends what he has on the necessary work of the rest of his farm."

A clatter of hoofs was heard, and Orde looked up with vexation, but his brow cleared as a horseman halted under the porch.

"Hello, Orde! Just looked in to ask if you are coming to polo on Tuesday; we want you badly to help to crumple up the Krab Bokhar team."

Orde explained that he had to go out into the District, and while the visitor complained that though good men wouldn't play, duffers were always keen, and that his side would probably be beaten, Pagett rose to look at his mount, a red, lathered Biloch mare, with a curious lyre-like incurving of the ears. "Quite a little thoroughbred in all other respects," said the M.P., and Orde presented Mr. Reginald Burke, Manager of the Sind and Sialkote Bank, to his friend.

"Yes, she's as good as they make 'em, and she's all the female I possess, and spoiled in consequence, aren't you, old girl?" said Burke, patting the mare's glossy neck as she backed and plunged.

"Mr. Pagett," said Orde, "has been asking me about the Congress. What is your opinion?" Burke turned to the M.P. with a frank smile.

"Well, if it's all the same to you, sir, I should say, Damn the Congress, but then I'm no politician, but only a business man."

"You find it a tiresome subject."

"Yes, it's all that, and worse than that, for this kind of agitation is anything but wholesome for the country."

"How do you mean?"

"It would be a long job to explain, and Sara here won't stand, but you know how sensitive capital is, and how timid investors are. All this sort of rot is likely to frighten them, and we can't afford to frighten them. The passengers aboard an ocean steamer don't feel reassured when the ship's way is stopped, and they hear the workmen's hammers tinkering at the engines down below. The old Ark's going on all right as she is, and only wants quiet and room to move. Them's my sentiments, and those of some people who have to do with money and business."

"Then you are a thick-and-thin supporter of the Government as it is."

"Why, no! The Indian Government is much too timid with its money—like an old maiden aunt of mine—always in a funk about her investments. They don't spend half enough on railways for instance, and they are slow in a general way, and ought to be made to sit up in all that concerns the encouragement of private enterprise, and coaxing out into use the millions of capital that lie dormant in the country."

The mare was dancing with impatience, and Burke was evidently anxious to be off, so the men wished him good-bye.

"Who is your genial friend who condemns both Congress and Government in a breath?" asked Pagett, with an amused smile.

"Just now he is Reggie Burke, keener on polo than on anything else, but if you go to the Sind and Sirkoee Bank to-morrow you would find Mr. Reginald Burke a

very capable man of business, known and liked by an immense constituency North and South of this."

"Do you think he is right about the Government's want of enterprise?"

"I should hesitate to say. Better consult the merchants and chambers of commerce in Cawnpore, Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. But though these bodies would like, as Reggie puts it, to make Government sit up, it is an elementary consideration in governing a country like India, which must be administered for the benefit of the people at large, that the counsels of those who resort to it for the sake of making money should be judiciously weighed and not allowed to overpower the rest. They are welcome guests here, as a matter of course, but it has been found best to restrain their influence. Thus the rights of plantation labourers, factory operatives, and the like, have been protected, and the capitalist, eager to get on, has not always regarded Government action with favour. It is quite conceivable that under an elective system the commercial communities of the great towns might find means to secure majorities on labour questions and on financial matters."

"They would act at least with intelligence and consideration."

"Intelligence, yes; but as to consideration, who at the present moment most bitterly resents the tender solicitude of Lancashire for the welfare and protection of the Indian factory operative? English and native capitalists running cotton mills and factories."

"But is the solicitude of Lancashire in this matter entirely disinterested?"

"It is no business of mine to say. I merely indicate an example of how a powerful commercial interest might hamper a Government intent in the first place on the larger interests of humanity."

Orde broke off to listen a moment. "There's Dr. Lathrop talking to my wife in the drawing-room," said he.

"Surely not; that's a lady's voice, and if my ears don't deceive me, an American."

"Exactly, Dr. Eva McCreery Lathrop, chief of the new Women's Hospital here, and a very good fellow forbye. Good morning, Doctor," he said, as a graceful figure came out on the veranda, "you seem to be in trouble. I hope Mrs. Orde was able to help you."

"Your wife is real kind and good, I always come to her when I'm in a fix, but I fear it's more than comforting I want."

"You work too hard and wear yourself out," said Orde, kindly. "Let me introduce my friend, Mr. Pagett, just fresh from home, and anxious to learn his India. You could tell him something of that more important half of which a mere man knows so little."

"Perhaps I could if I'd any heart to do it, but I'm in trouble. I've lost a case, a case that was doing well, through nothing in the world but inattention on the part of a nurse I had begun to trust. And when I spoke only a small piece of my mind she collapsed in a whining heap on the floor. It is hopeless!"

The men were silent, for the blue eyes of the lady doctor were dim. Recovering herself, she looked up with a smile, half sad, half humorous. "And I am in a whining

heap, too; but what phase of Indian life are you particularly interested in, sir?"

"Mr. Pagett intends to study the political aspect of things and the possibility of bestowing electoral institutions on the people."

"Wouldn't it be as much to the purpose to bestow point-lace collars on them? They need many things more urgently than votes. Why, it's like giving a bread-pill for a broken leg."

"Er—I don't quite follow," said Pagett, uneasily.

"Well, what's the matter with this country is not in the least political, but an all-round entanglement of physical, social, and moral evils and corruptions, all more or less due to the unnatural treatment of women. You can't gather figs from thistles, and so long as the system of infant marriage, the prohibition of the remarriage of widows, the lifelong imprisonment of wives and mothers in a worse than penal confinement, and the withholding from them of any kind of education or treatment as rational beings continues, the country can't advance a step. Half of it is morally dead, and worse than dead, and that's just the half from which we have a right to look for the best impulses. It's right here where the trouble is, and not in any political consideration whatsoever."

"But do they marry so early?" said Pagett, vaguely.

"The average age is seven, but thousands are married still earlier. One result is that girls of twelve and thirteen have to bear the burden of wifehood and motherhood, and, as might be expected, the rate of mortality both for mothers and children is terrible. Pauperism, domestic unhappiness, and a low state of health are only a few of

the consequences of this. Then, when, as frequently happens, the boy-husband dies prematurely, his widow is condemned to worse than death. She may not remarry, must live a secluded and despised life, a life so unnatural, that she sometimes prefers suicide; more often she goes astray. You don't know in England what such words as 'infant-marriage, baby-wife, girl-mother, and virgin-widow' mean; but they mean unspeakable horrors here."

"Well, but the advanced political party here will surely make it their business to advocate social reforms as well as political ones," said Pagett.

"Very surely they will do no such thing," said the lady doctor, emphatically. "I *wish* I could make you understand. Why, even of the funds devoted to the Marchioness of Dufferin's organisation for medical aid to the women of India, it was said in print and in speech that they would be better spent on more college scholarships for men. And in all the advanced parties' talk—God forgive them—and in all their programmes, they carefully avoid all such subjects. They will talk about the protection of the cow, for that's an ancient superstition—they can all understand that; but the protection of the women is a new and dangerous idea." She turned to Pagett impulsively:

"You are a member of the English Parliament. Can you do nothing? The foundations of their life are rotten—utterly and bestially rotten. I could tell your wife things that I couldn't tell you. I know the life—the inner life that belongs to the native, and I know nothing else; and, believe me, you might as well try to grow golden rod in a mushroom-pit as to make anything of a people that are born and reared as these—these things are. The

men talk of their rights and privileges. I have seen the women that bear these very men, and again—may God forgive the men!"

Pagett's eyes opened with a large wonder. Dr. Lathrop rose tempestuously.

"I must be off to lecture," said she, "and I'm sorry that I can't show you my hospitals; but you had better believe, sir, that it's more necessary for India than all the elections in creation."

"That's a woman with a mission, and no mistake," said Pagett, after a pause.

"Yes; she believes in her work, and so do I," said Orde. "I've a notion that in the end it will be found that the most helpful work done for India in this generation was wrought by Lady Dufferin in drawing attention—what work that was, by the way, even with her husband's great name to back it!—to the needs of women here. In effect, native habits and beliefs are an organised conspiracy against the laws of health and happy life—but there is some dawning of hope now."

"How d' you account for the general indifference, then?"

"I suppose it's due in part to their fatalism and their utter indifference to all human suffering. How much do you imagine the great province of the Punjab, with over twenty million people and half a score rich towns, has contributed to the maintenance of civil dispensaries last year? About seven thousand rupees."

"That's seven hundred pounds," said Pagett, quickly.

"I wish it was," replied Orde; "but, anyway, it's an

absurdly inadequate sum, and shows one of the blank sides of Oriental character."

Pagett was silent for a long time. The question of direct and personal pain did not lie within his researches. He preferred to discuss the weightier matters of the law, and contented himself with murmuring: "They'll do better later on." Then, with a rush, returning to his first thought:

"But, my dear Orde, if it's merely a class movement of a local and temporary character, how d' you account for Bradlaugh, who is at least a man of sense, taking it up?"

"I know nothing of the champion of the New Brahmins but what I see in the papers. I suppose there is something tempting in being hailed by a large assemblage as the representative of the aspirations of two hundred and fifty millions of people. Such a man looks 'through all the roaring and the wreaths,' and does not reflect that it is a false perspective, which, as a matter of fact, hides the real complex and manifold India from his gaze. He can scarcely be expected to distinguish between the ambitions of a new oligarchy and the real wants of the people of whom he knows nothing. But it's strange that a professed Radical should come to be the chosen advocate of a movement which has for its aim the revival of an ancient tyranny. Shows how even Radicalism can fall into academic grooves and miss the essential truths of its own creed. Believe me, Pagett, to deal with India you want first-hand knowledge and experience. I wish he would come and live here for a couple of years or so."

"Is not this rather an *ad hominem* style of argument?"

"Can't help it in a case like this. Indeed, I am not sure you ought not to go further and weigh the whole character and quality and upbringing of the man. You must admit that the monumental complacency with which he trotted out his ingenious little Constitution for India showed a strange want of imagination and the sense of humour."

"No, I don't quite admit it," said Pagett.

"Well, you know him and I don't, but that's how it strikes a stranger." He turned on his heel and paced the veranda thoughtfully. "And, after all, the burden of the actual, daily unromantic toil falls on the shoulders of the men out here, and not on his own. He enjoys all the privileges of recommendation without responsibility, and we—well, perhaps, when you've seen a little more of India you'll understand. To begin with, our death rate's five times higher than yours—I speak now for the brutal bureaucrat—and we work on the refuse of worked-out cities and exhausted civilizations, among the bones of the dead."

Pagett laughed. "That's an epigrammatic way of putting it, Orde."

"Is it? Let's see," said the Deputy Commissioner of Amara, striding into the sunshine towards a half-naked gardener potting roses. He took the man's hoe, and went to a rain-scarped bank at the bottom of the garden.

"Come here, Pagett," he said, and cut at the sun-baked soil. After three strokes there rolled from under the blade of the hoe the half of a clanking skeleton that set-

tled at Pagett's feet in an unseemly jumble of bones. The M. P. drew back.

"Our houses are built on cemeteries," said Orde. "There are scores of thousands of graves within ten miles."

Pagett was contemplating the skull with the awed fascination of a man who has but little to do with the dead. "India's a very curious place," said he, after a pause.

"Ah? You'll know all about it in three months Come in to lunch," said Orde.

"THE FINEST STORY IN THE WORLD."

"Or ever the knightly years were gone
With the old world to the grave,
I was a king in Babylon
And you were a Christian slave."

W. E. HENLEY.

His name was Charlie Mears; he was the only son of his mother, who was a widow, and he lived in the north of London, coming into the City every day to work in a bank. He was twenty years old and suffered from aspirations. I met him in a public billiard-saloon where the marker called him by his given name, and he called the marker "Bullseyes." Charlie explained, a little nervously, that he had only come to the place to look on, and since looking on at games of skill is not a cheap amusement for the young, I suggested that Charlie should go back to his mother.

That was our first step toward better acquaintance. He would call on me sometimes in the evenings instead of running about London with his fellow-clerks; and before long, speaking of himself as a young man must, he told me of his aspirations, which were all literary. He desired to make himself an undying name chiefly through verse, though he was not above sending stories of love and death to the drop-a-penny-in-the-slot journals. It was my fate to sit still while Charlie read me poems of

many hundred lines, and bulky fragments of plays that would surely shake the world. My reward was his unreserved confidence, and the self-revelations and troubles of a young man are almost as holy as those of a maiden. Charlie had never fallen in love, but was anxious to do so on the first opportunity; he believed in all things good and all things honorable, but, at the same time, was curiously careful to let me see that he knew his way about the world as befitted a bank clerk on twenty-five shillings a week. He rhymed "dove" with "love" and "moon" with "June," and devoutly believed that they had never so been rhymed before. The long lame gaps in his plays he filled up with hasty words of apology and description and swept on, seeing all that he intended to do so clearly that he esteemed it already done, and turned to me for applause.

I fancy that his mother did not encourage his aspirations, and I know that his writing-table at home was the edge of his washstand. This he told me almost at the outset of our acquaintance; when he was ravaging my bookshelves, and a little before I was implored to speak the truth as to his chances of "writing something really great, you know." Maybe I encouraged him too much, for, one night, he called on me, his eyes flaming with excitement, and said breathlessly:

"Do you mind—can you let me stay here and write all this evening? I won't interrupt you, I won't really. There's no place for me to write at my mother's."

"What's the trouble?" I said, knowing well what that trouble was.

"I've a notion in my head that would make the most

splendid story that was ever written. Do let me write it out here. It's *such* a notion!"

There was no resisting the appeal. I set him a table; he hardly thanked me, but plunged into the work at once. For half an hour the pen scratched without stopping. Then Charlie sighed and tugged his hair. The scratching grew slower, there were more erasures, and at last ceased. The finest story in the world would not come forth.

"It looks such awful rot now," he said mournfully. "And yet it seemed so good when I was thinking about it. What's wrong?"

I could not dishearten him by saying the truth. So I answered: "Perhaps you don't feel in the mood for writing."

"Yes I do—except when I look at this stuff. Ugh!"

"Read me what you've done," I said.

He read, and it was wondrous bad, and he paused at all the specially turgid sentences, expecting a little approval; for he was proud of those sentences, as I knew he would be.

"It needs compression," I suggested cautiously.

"I hate cutting my things down. I don't think you could alter a word here without spoiling the sense. It reads better aloud than when I was writing it."

"Charlie, you're suffering from an alarming disease afflicting a numerous class. Put the thing by, and tackle it again in a week."

"I want to do it at once. What do you think of it?"

"How can I judge from a half written tale? Tell me the story as it lies in your head."

Charlie told, and in the telling there was everything that his ignorance had so carefully prevented from escaping into the written word. I looked at him, wondering whether it were possible that he did not know the originality, the power of the notion that had come in his way? It was distinctly a Notion among notions. Men had been puffed up with pride by notions not a tithe as excellent and practicable. But Charlie babbled on serenely, interrupting the current of pure fancy with samples of horrible sentences that he purposed to use. I heard him out to the end. It would be folly to allow his idea to remain in his own inept hands, when I could do so much with it. Not all that could be done indeed; but, oh so much!

"What do you think?" he said at last. "I fancy I shall call it 'The Story of a Ship.'"

"I think the idea's pretty good; but you won't be able to handle it for ever so long. Now I——"

"Would it be of any use to you? Would you care to take it? I should be proud," said Charlie promptly.

There are few things sweeter in this world than the guileless, hot-headed, intemperate, open admiration of a junior. Even a woman in her blindest devotion does not fall into the gait of the man she adores, tilt her bonnet to the angle at which he wears his hat, or interlard her speech with his pet oaths. And Charlie did all these things. Still it was necessary to salve my conscience before I possessed myself of Charlie's thoughts.

"Let's make a bargain. I'll give you a fiver for the notion," I said.

Charlie became a bank clerk at once.

"Oh, that's impossible. Between two pals, you know, if I may call you so, and speaking as a man of the world, I couldn't. Take the notion if it's any use to you. I've heaps more."

He had—none knew this better than I—but they were the notions of other men.

"Look at it as a matter of business—between men of the world," I returned "Five pounds will buy you any number of poetry-books. Business is business, and you may be sure I shouldn't give that price unless——"

"Oh, if you put it *that* way," said Charlie, visibly moved by the thought of the books. The bargain was clinched with an agreement that he should at unstated intervals come to me with all the notions that he possessed, should have a table of his own to write at, and unquestioned right to inflict upon me all his poems and fragments of poems. Then I said, "Now tell me how you came by this idea."

"It came by itself." Charlie's eyes opened a little.

"Yes, but you told me a great deal about the hero that you must have read before somewhere."

"I haven't any time for reading, except when you let me sit here, and on Sundays I'm on my bicycle or down the river all day. There's nothing wrong about the hero, is there?"

"Tell me again and I shall understand clearly. You say that your hero went pirating. How did he live?"

"He was on the lower deck of this ship-thing that I was telling you about."

"What sort of ship?"

"It was the kind rowed with oars, and the sea spurts

through the oar-holes and the men row sitting up to their knees in water. Then there's a bench running down between the two lines of oars and an overseer with a whip walks up and down the bench to make the men work."

"How do you know?"

"It's in the tale. There's a rope running overhead, looped to the upper deck, for the overseer to catch hold of when the ship rolls. When the overseer misses the rope once and falls among the rowers, remember the hero laughs at him and gets licked for it. He's chained to his oar of course—the hero."

"How is he chained?"

"With an iron band round his waist fixed to the bench he sits on, and a sort of handcuff on his left wrist chaining him to the oar. He's on the lower deck where the worst men are sent, and the only light comes from the hatchways and through the oar-holes. Can't you imagine the sunlight just squeezing through between the handle and the hole and wobbling about as the ship moves?"

"I can, but I can't imagine your imagining it."

"How could it be any other way? Now you listen to me. The long oars on the upper deck are managed by four men to each bench, the lower ones by three, and the lowest of all by two. Remember it's quite dark on the lowest deck and all the men there go mad. When a man dies at his oar on that deck he isn't thrown overboard, but cut up in his chains and stuffed through the oar-hole in little pieces."

"Why?" I demanded amazed, not so much at the information as the tone of command in which it was flung out.

"To save trouble and frighten the others. It needs two overseers to drag a man's body up to the top deck; and if the men at the lower deck oars were left alone, of course they'd stop rowing and try to pull up the benches by all standing up together in their chains."

"You've a most provident imagination. Where have you been reading about galleys and galley-slaves?"

"Nowhere that I remember. I row a litde when I get the chance. But, perhaps, if you say so, I may have read something."

He went away shortly afterwards to deal with booksellers, and I wondered how a bank clerk aged twenty could put into my hands with a profligate abundance of detail, all given with absolute assurance, the story of extravagant and bloodthirsty adventure, riot, piracy, and death in unnamed seas. He had led his hero a desperate dance through revolt against the overseers, to command of a ship of his own, and ultimate establishment of a kingdom on an island "somewhere in the sea, you know;" and, delighted with my paltry five pounds, had gone out to buy the notions of other men, that these might teach him how to write. I had the consolation of knowing that this notion was mine by right of purchase, and I thought that I could make something of it.

When next he came to me he was drunk—royally drunk on many poets for the first time revealed to him. His pupils were dilated, his words tumbled over each other, and he wrapped himself in quotations. Most of all was he drunk on Longfellow.

"Isn't it splendid? Isn't it superb?" he cried, after hasty greetings. "Listen to this—

> " 'Wouldst thou'—so the helmsman answered,
> 'Know the secret of the sea?
> Only those who brave its dangers
> Comprehend its mystery.'

By gum!

> " 'Only those who brave its dangers
> Comprehend its mystery,' "

he repeated twenty times, walking up and down the room and forgetting me. "But *I* can understand it too," he said to himself. "I don't know how to thank you for that fiver. And this; listen—

> " 'I remember the black wharves and the ships
> And the sea-tides tossing free,
> And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
> And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
> And the magic of the sea.'

I haven't braved any dangers, but I feel as if I knew all about it."

"You certainly seem to have a grip of the sea. Have you ever seen it?"

"When I was a little chap I went to Brighton once; we used to live in Coventry, though, before we came to London. I never saw it,

> " 'When descends on the Atlantic
> The gigantic
> Storm-wind of the Equinox.' "

He shook me by the shoulder to make me understand the passion that was shaking himself.

"When that storm comes," he continued, "I think that

all the oars in the ship that I was talking about get broken, and the rowers have their chests smashed in by the bucking oar-heads. By the way, have you done anything with that notion of mine yet?"

"No. I was waiting to hear more of it from you. Tell me how in the world you're so certain about the fittings of the ship. You know nothing of ships."

"I don't know. It's as real as anything to me until I try to write it down. I was thinking about it only last night in bed, after you had lent me 'Treasure Island;' and I made up a whole lot of new things to go into the story."

"What sort of things?"

"About the food the men ate; rotten figs and black beans and wine in a skin bag, passed from bench to bench."

"Was the ship built so long ago as *that?*"

"As what? I don't know whether it was long ago or not. It's only a notion, but sometimes it seems just as real as if it was true. Do I bother you with talking about it?"

"Not in the least. Did you make up anything else?"

"Yes, but it's nonsense." Charlie flushed a little.

"Never mind; let's hear about it."

"Well, I was thinking over the story, and after a while I got out of bed and wrote down on a piece of paper the sort of stuff the men might be supposed to scratch on their oars with the edges of their handcuffs. It seemed to make the thing more life-like. It *is* so real to me, y'know."

"Have you the paper on you?"

"Ye-es, but what's the use of showing it? It's only a lot of scratches. All the same, we might have 'em reproduced in the book on the front page."

"I'll attend to those details. Show me what your men wrote."

He pulled out of his pocket a sheet of note-paper, with a single line of scratches upon it, and I put this carefully away.

"What is it supposed to mean in English?" I said.

"Oh, I don't know. Perhaps it means 'I'm beastly tired.' It's great nonsense," he repeated, "but all those men in the ship seem as real as real people to me. Do do something to the notion soon; I should like to see it written and printed."

"But all you've told me would make a long book."

"Make it then. You've only to sit down and write it out."

"Give me a little time. Have you any more notions?"

"Not just now. I'm reading all the books I've bought. They're splendid."

When he had left I looked at the sheet of note paper with the inscription upon it. Then I took my head tenderly between both hands, to make certain that it was not coming off or turning round. Then . . . but there seemed to be no interval between quitting my rooms and finding myself arguing with a policeman outside a door marked *Private* in a corridor of the British Museum. All I demanded, as politely as possible, was "the Greek antiquity man." The policeman knew nothing except the rules of the Museum, and it became necessary to forage through all the houses and offices inside the gates. An

elderly gentleman called away from his lunch put an end to my search by holding the note-paper between finger and thumb and sniffing at it scornfully.

"What does this mean? H'mm," said he. "So far as I can ascertain it is an attempt to write extremely corrupt Greek on the part"—here he glared at me with intention—"of an extremely illiterate—ah—person." He read slowly from the paper, "*Pollock, Erckmann, Tauchnitz, Henniker*"—four names familiar to me.

"Can you tell me what the corruption is supposed to mean—the gist of the thing?" I asked.

"'I have been—many times—overcome with weariness in this particular employment.' That is the meaning." He returned me the paper, and I fled without a word of thanks, explanation or apology.

I might have been excused for forgetting much. To me of all men had been given the chance to write the most marvellous tale in the world, nothing less than the story of a Greek galley-slave, as told by himself. Small wonder that his dreaming had seemed real to Charlie. The Fates that are so careful to shut the doors of each successive life behind us had, in this case, been neglectful, and Charlie was looking, though that he did not know, where never man had been permitted to look with full knowledge since time began. Above all, he was absolutely ignorant of the knowledge sold to me for five pounds; and he would retain that ignorance, for bank-clerks do not understand metempsychosis, and a sound commercial education does not include Greek. He would supply me—here I capered among the dumb gods of Egypt and laughed in their battered faces—with material

to make my tale sure—so sure that the world would hail it as an impudent and vamped fiction. And I—I alone would know that it was absolutely and literally true. I—I alone held this jewel to my hand for the cutting and polishing. Therefore I danced again among the gods till a policeman saw me and took steps in my direction.

It remained now only to encourage Charlie to talk, and here there was no difficulty. But I had forgotten those accursed books of poetry. He came to me time after time, as useless as a surcharged phonograph—drunk on Byron, Shelley, or Keats. Knowing not what the boy had been in his past lives, and desperately anxious not to lose one word of his babble, I could not hide from him my respect and interest. He misconstrued both into respect for the present soul of Charlie Mears, to whom life was as new as it was to Adam, and interest in his readings; and stretched my patience to breaking point by reciting poetry—not his own, but that of others. I wished every English poet blotted out of the memory of mankind. I blasphemed the mightiest names of song because they had drawn Charlie from the path of direct narrative, and would, later, spur him to imitate them; but I choked down my impatience until the first flood of enthusiasm should have spent itself and the boy returned to his dreams.

"What's the use of my telling you what *I* think, when these chaps wrote things for the angels to read?" he growled, one evening. "Why don't you write something like theirs?"

"I don't think you're treating me quite fairly," I said, speaking under strong restraint.

"I've given you the story," he said, shortly, replunging into "Lara."

"But I want the details."

"The things I make up about that damned ship that you call a galley? They're quite easy. You can just make 'em up yourself. Turn up the gas a little, I want to go on reading."

I could have broken the gas globe over his head for his amazing stupidity. I could indeed make up things for myself did I only know what Charlie did not know that he knew. But since the doors were shut behind me I could only wait his youthful pleasure and strive to keep him in good temper. One minute's want of guard might spoil a priceless revelation; now and again he would toss his books aside—he kept them in my rooms, for his mother would have been shocked at the waste of good money had she seen them—and launched into his sea dreams. Again I cursed all the poets of England. The plastic mind of the bank-clerk had been overlaid, coloured, and distorted by that which he had read, and the result as delivered was a confused tangle of other voices most like the muttered song through a City telephone in the busiest part of the day.

He talked of the galley—his own galley had he but known it—with illustrations borrowed from the "Bride of Abydos." He pointed the experiences of his hero with quotations from "The Corsair," and threw in deep and desperate moral reflections from "Cain" and "Manfred," expecting me to use them all. Only when the talk turned on Longfellow were the jarring cross-currents dumb, and

I knew that Charlie was speaking the truth as he remembered it.

"What do you think of this?" I said one evening, as soon as I understood the medium in which his memory worked best, and, before he could expostulate, read him the whole of "The Saga of King Olaf!"

He listened open-mouthed, flushed, his hands drumming on the back of the sofa where he lay, till I came to the Song of Einar Tamberskelver and the verse:

> "Einar then, the arrow taking
> From the loosened string,
> Answered: 'That was Norway breaking
> 'Neath thy hand, O King.'"

He gasped with pure delight of sound.

"That's better than Byron, a little," I ventured.

"Better? Why it's *true!* How could he have known?" I went back and repeated.

> 'What was that?' said Olaf, standing
> On the quarter-deck,
> 'Something heard I like the stranding
> Of a shattered wreck?'"

"How could he have known how the ships crash and the oars rip out and go *z-zzp* all along the line? Why, only the other night . . . But go back and please read 'The Skerry of Shrieks' again."

"No, I'm tired. Let's talk. What happened the other night?"

"I had an awful nightmare about that galley of ours. I dreamed I was drowned in a fight. You see we ran alongside another ship in harbour. The water was dead

still except where our oars whipped it up. You know where I always sit in the galley?" He spoke haltingly at first, under a fine English fear of being laughed at.

"No. That's news to me," I answered, meekly, my heart beginning to beat.

"On the fourth oar from the bow on the right side on the upper deck. There were four of us at that oar, all chained. I remember watching the water and trying to get my handcuffs off before the row began. Then we closed up on the other ship, and all their fighting men jumped over our bulwarks, and my bench broke and I was pinned down with three other fellows on top of me, and the big oar jammed across our backs."

"Well?" Charlie's eyes were alive and alight. He was looking at the wall behind my chair.

"I don't know how we fought. The men were trampling all over my back, and I lay low. Then our rowers on the left side—tied to their oars, you know—began to yell and back water. I could hear the water sizzle, and we spun round like a cockchafer, and I knew, lying where I was, that there was a galley coming up bow-on, to ram us on the left side. I could just lift up my head and see her sail over the bulwarks. We wanted to meet her bow to bow, but it was too late. We could only turn a little bit because the galley on our right had hooked herself on to us and stopped our moving. Then, by gum! there was a crash! Our left oars began to break as the other galley, the moving one y'know, stuck her nose into them. Then the lower-deck oars shot up through the deck planking, butt first, and one of them jumped clean up into the air and came down again close to my head."

"How was that managed?"

"The moving galley's bow was plunking them back through their own oar holes, and I could hear the devil of a shindy in the decks below. Then her nose caught us nearly in the middle, and we tilted sideways, and the fellows in the right-hand galley unhitched their hooks and ropes, and threw things on to our upper deck—arrows, and hot pitch or something that stung, and we went up and up and up on the left side, and the right side dipped, and I twisted my head round and saw the water stand still as it topped the right bulwarks, and then it curled over and crashed down on the whole lot of us on the right side, and I felt it hit my back, and I woke."

"One minute, Charlie. When the sea topped the bulwarks, what did it look like?" I had my reasons for asking. A man of my acquaintance had once gone down with a leaking ship in a still sea, and had seen the water-level pause for an instant ere it fell on the deck.

"It looked just like a banjo-string drawn tight, and it seemed to stay there for years," said Charlie.

Exactly! The other man had said: "It looked like a silver wire laid down along on the bulwarks, and I thought it was never going to break." He had paid everything except the bare life for this little valueless piece of knowledge, and I had traveled ten thousand weary miles to meet him and take his knowledge at second hand. But Charlie, the bank clerk on twenty five shillings a week, he who had never been out of sight of a London omnibus, knew it all. It was no consolation to me that once in his lives he had been forced to die for his gains. I also must have died scores of times but behind

me, because I could have used my knowledge, the doors were shut.

"And then?" I said, trying to put away the devil of envy.

"The funny thing was, though, in all the mess I didn't feel a bit astonished or frightened. It seemed as if I'd been in a good many fights, because I told my next man so when the row began. But that cad of an overseer on my deck wouldn't unloose our chains and give us a chance. He always said that we'd all be set free after a battle, but we never were; we never were." Charlie shook his head mournfully.

"What a scoundrel!"

"I should say he was. He never gave us enough to eat, and sometimes we were so thirsty that we used to drink salt-water. I can taste that salt-water still."

"Now tell me something about the harbour where the fight was fought."

"I didn't dream about that. I know it was a harbour, though; because we were tied up to a ring on a white wall and all the face of the stone under water was covered with wood to prevent our ram getting chipped when the tide made us rock."

"That's curious. Our hero commanded the galley, didn't he?"

"Didn't he just! He stood by the bows and shouted like a good 'un. He was the man who killed the overseer."

"But you were all drowned together, Charlie, weren't you?"

"I can't make that fit quite," he said, with a puzzled

look. "The galley must have gone down with all hands, and yet I fancy that the hero went on living afterwards. Perhaps he climbed into the attacking ship. I wouldn't see that, of course. I was dead, you know."

He shivered slightly and protested that he could remember no more.

I did not press him further, but to satisfy myself that he lay in ignorance of the workings of his own mind, deliberately introduced him to Mortimer Collins' "Transmigration," and gave him a sketch of the plot before he opened the pages.

"What rot it all is!" he said frankly, at the end of an hour. "I don't understand his nonsense about the Red Planet Mars and the King, and the rest of it. Chuck me the Longfellow again."

I handed him the book and wrote out as much as I could remember of his description of the sea-fight, appealing to him from time to time for confirmation of fact or detail. He would answer without raising his eyes from the book, as assuredly as though all his knowledge lay before him on the printed page. I spoke under the normal key of my voice that the current might not be broken, and I know that he was not aware of what he was saying, for his thoughts were out on the sea with Longfellow.

"Charlie," I asked, "when the rowers on the galleys mutinied how did they kill their overseers?"

"Tore up the benches and brained 'em. That happened when a heavy sea was running. An overseer on the lower deck slipped from the centre plank and fell among the rowers. They choked him to death against the side

of the ship with their chained hands quite quietly, and it was too dark for the other overseer to see what had happened. When he asked, he was pulled down too and choked, and the lower deck fought their way up deck by deck, with the pieces of the broken benches banging behind 'em. How they howled!"

"And what happened after that?"

"I don't know. The hero went away—red hair and red beard and all. That was after he had captured our galley, I think."

The sound of my voice irritated him, and he motioned slightly with his left hand as a man does when interruption jars.

"You never told me he was red-headed before, or that he captured your galley," I said, after a discreet interval.

Charlie did not raise his eyes.

"He was a red as a red bear," said he abstractedly. "He came from the north; they said so in the galley when he looked for rowers—not slaves, but free men. Afterwards—years and years afterwards—news came from another ship, or else he came back——"

His lips moved in silence. He was rapturously retasting some poem before him.

"Where had he been, then?" I was almost whispering that the sentence might come gently to whichever section of Charlie's brain was working on my behalf.

"To the Beaches—the Long and Wonderful Beaches!" was the reply after a minute of silence.

"To Furdurstrandi?" I asked, tingling from head to foot.

"Yes, to Furdurstrandi?" he pronounced the word in a new fashion. "And I too saw——" The voice failed.

"Do you know what you have said?" I shouted incautiously.

He lifted his eyes, fully roused now. "No!" he snapped. "I wish you'd let a chap go on reading. Hark to this:—

> "'But Othere, the old sea captain,
> He neither paused nor stirred
> Till the king listened, and then
> Once more took up his pen
> And wrote down every word.
>
> "'And to the King of the Saxons
> In witness of the truth,
> Raising his noble head,
> He stretched his brown hand and said,
> "Behold this walrus tooth."'

By Jove, what chaps those must have been, to go sailing all over the shop never knowing where they'd fetch the land! Hah!"

"Charlie," I pleaded, "if you'll only be sensible for a minute or two I'll make our hero in our tale every inch as good as Othere."

"Umph! Longfellow wrote that poem. I don't care about writing things any more. I want to read." He was thoroughly out of tune now, and, raging over my own ill-luck, I left him.

Conceive yourself at the door of the world's treasure-house guarded by a child—an idle irresponsible child playing knuckle-bones—on whose favour depends the gift of the key, and you will imagine one half my torment. Till that evening Charlie had spoken nothing that

might not lie within the experiences of a Greek galley-slave. But now, or there was no virtue in books, he had talked of some desperate adventure of the Vikings, of Thorfin Karlsefne's sailing to Wineland, which is America, in the ninth or tenth century. The battle in the harbour he had seen; and his own death he had described. But this was a much more startling plunge into the past. Was it possible that he had skipped half a dozen lives and was then dimly remembering some episode of a thousand years later? It was a maddening jumble, and the worst of it was that Charlie Mears in his normal condition was the last person in the world to clear it up. I could only wait and watch, but I went to bed that night full of the wildest imaginings. There was nothing that was not possible if Charlie's detestable memory only held good.

I might rewrite the Saga of Thorfin Karlsefne as it had never been written before; might tell the story of the first discovery of America, myself the discoverer. But I was entirely at Charlie's mercy, and so long as there was a three-and-sixpenny Bohn volume within his reach Charlie would not tell. I dared not curse him openly; I hardly dared jog his memory, for I was dealing with the experiences of a thousand years ago, told through the mouth of a boy of to-day; and a boy of to-day is affected by every change of tone and gust of opinion, so that he lies even when he desires to speak the truth.

I saw no more of him for nearly a week. When next I met him it was in Gracechurch Street with a billbook chained to his waist. Business took him over London Bridge and I accompanied him. He was very full of the importance of that book and magnified it. As we passed

over the Thames we paused to look at a steamer unloading great slabs of white and brown marble. A barge drifted under the steamer's stern and a lonely cow in that barge bellowed. Charlie's face changed from the face of the bank-clerk to that of an unknown and—though he would not have believed this—a much shrewder man. He flung out his arm across the parapet of the bridge and laughing very loudly, said:—

"When they heard *our* bulls bellow the Skrœlings ran away!"

I waited only for an instant, but the barge and the cow had disappeared under the bows of the steamer before I answered.

"Charlie, what do you suppose are Skrœlings?"

"Never heard of 'em before. They sound like a new kind of sea-gull. What a chap you are for asking questions!" he replied. "I have to go to the cashier of the Omnibus Company yonder. Will you wait for me and we can lunch somewhere together? I've a notion for a poem."

"No, thanks. I'm off. You're sure you know nothing about Skrœlings?"

"Not unless he's been entered for the Liverpool Handicap." He nodded and disappeared in the crowd.

Now it is written in the Saga of Eric the Red or that of Thorfin Karlsefne, that nine hundred years ago when Karlsefne's galleys came to Leif's booths, which Leif had erected in the unknown land called Markland, which may or may not have been Rhode Island, the Skrœlings—and the Lord He knows who these may or may not have been—came to trade with the Vikings, and ran

away because they were frightened at the bellowing of the cattle which Thorfin had brought with him in the ships. But what in the world could a Greek slave know of that affair? I wandered up and down among the streets trying to unravel the mystery, and the more I considered it, the more baffling it grew. One thing only seemed certain, and that certainty took away my breath for the moment. If I came to full knowledge of anything at all, it would not be one life of the soul in Charlie Mears' body, but half a dozen—half a dozen several and separate existences spent on blue water in the morning of the world!

Then I walked around the situation.

Obviously if I used my knowledge I should stand alone and unapproachable until all men were as wise as myself. That would be something, but manlike I was ungrateful. It seemed bitterly unfair that Charlie's memory should fail me when I needed it most. Great Powers above—I looked up at them through the fog smoke—did the Lords of Life and Death know what this meant to me? Nothing less than eternal fame of the best kind, that comes from One, and is shared by one alone. I would be content—remembering Clive, I stood astounded at my own moderation—with the mere right to tell one story, to work out one little contribution to the light literature of the day. If Charlie were permitted full recollection for one hour—for sixty short minutes—of existences that had extended over a thousand years—I would forego all profit and honour from all that I should make of his speech. I would take no share in the commotion that would follow throughout the particular

corner of the earth that calls itself "the world." The thing should be put forth anonymously. Nay, I would make other men believe they had written it. They would hire bull-hided self-advertising Englishmen to bellow it abroad. Preachers would found a fresh conduct of life upon it, swearing that it was new and that they had lifted the fear of death from all mankind. Every Orientalist in Europe would patronize it discursively with Sanskrit and Pali texts. Terrible women would invent unclean variants of the men's belief for the elevation of their sisters. Churches and religions would war over it. Between the hailing and re-starting of an omnibus I foresaw the scuffles that would arise among half a dozen denominations all professing "the doctrine of the True Metempsychosis as applied to the world and the New Era"; and saw, too, the respectable English newspapers shying, like frightened kine, over the beautiful simplicity of the tale. The mind leaped forward a hundred—two hundred—a thousand years. I saw with sorrow that men would mutilate and garble the story; that rival creeds would turn it upside down till, at last, the western world which clings to the dread of death more closely than the hope of life, would set it aside as an interesting superstition and stampede after some faith so long forgotten that it seemed altogether new. Upon this I changed the terms of the bargain that I would make with the Lords of Life and Death. Only let me know, let me write, the story with sure knowledge that I wrote the truth, and I would burn the manuscript as a solemn sacrifice. Five minutes after the last line was written I would destroy it

all. But I must be allowed to write it with absolute certainty.

There was no answer. The flaming colours of an Aquarium poster caught my eye and I wondered whether it would be wise or prudent to lure Charlie into the hands of the professional mesmerist, and whether, if he were under his power, he would speak of his past lives. If he did, and if people believed him . . . but Charlie would be frightened and flustered, or made conceited by the interviews. In either case he would begin to lie, through fear or vanity. He was safest in my own hands.

"They are very funny fools, your English," said a voice at my elbow, and turning round I recognized a casual acquaintance, a young Bengali law student, called Grish Chunder, whose father had sent him to England to become civilized. The old man was a retired native official, and on an income of five pounds a month contrived to allow his son two hundred pounds a year, and the run of his teeth in a city where he could pretend to be the cadet of a royal house, and tell stories of the brutal Indian bureaucrats who ground the faces of the poor.

Grish Chunder was a young, fat, full-bodied Bengali dressed with scrupulous care in a frock coat, tall hat, light trousers and tan gloves. But I had known him in the days when the brutal Indian Government paid for his university education, and he contributed cheap sedition to *Sachi Durpan*, and intrigued with the wives of his schoolmates.

"That is very funny and very foolish," he said, nodding at the poster. "I am going down to the Northbrook Club. Will you come too?"

I walked with him for some time. "You are not well," he said. "What is there in your mind? You do not talk."

"Grish Chunder, you've been too well educated to believe in a God, haven't you?"

"Oah, yes, *here!* But when I go home I must conciliate popular superstition, and make ceremonies of purification, and my women will anoint idols."

"And hang up *tulsi* and feast the *purohit,* and take you back into caste again and make a good *khuttri* of you again, you advanced social Freethinker. And you'll eat *desi* food, and like it all, from the smell in the courtyard to the mustard oil over you."

"I shall very much like it," said Grish Chunder unguardedly. "Once a Hindu—always a Hindu. But I like to know what the English think they know."

"I'll tell you something that one Englishman knows. It's an old tale to you."

I began to tell the story of Charlie in English, but Grish Chunder put a question in the vernacular, and the history went forward naturally in the tongue best suited for its telling. After all it could never have been told in English. Grish Chunder heard me, nodding from time to time, and then came up to my rooms where I finished the tale.

"*Beshak,*" he said philosophically. "*Lekin darwaza band hai.* (Without doubt, but the door is shut.) I have heard of this remembering of previous existences among my people. It is of course an old tale with us, but, to happen to an Englishman—a cow-fed *Malechh*—an outcast. By Jove, that is most peculiar!"

"Outcast yourself, Grish Chunder! You eat cowbeef every day. Let's think the thing over. The boy remembers his incarnations."

"Does he know that?" said Grish Chunder quietly, swinging his legs as he sat on my table. He was speaking in English now.

"He does not know anything. Would I speak to you if he did? Go on!"

"There's no going on at all. If you tell that to your friends they will say you are mad and put it in the papers. Suppose, now, you prosecute for libel."

"Let's leave that out of the question entirely. Is there any chance of his being made to speak?"

"There is a chance. Oah, yes! But *if* he spoke it would mean that all this world would end now—*instanto*—fall down on your head. These things are not allowed, you know. As I said, the door is shut."

"Not a ghost of a chance?"

"How can there be? You are a Christi-an, and it is forbidden to eat, in your books, of the Tree of Life, or else you would never die. How shall you all fear death if you all know what your friend does not know that he knows? I am afraid to be kicked, but I am not afraid to die, because I know what I know. You are not afraid to be kicked but you are afraid to die. If you were not, by God! you English would be all over the shop in an hour, upsetting the balance of power, and making commotions. It would not be good. But no fear. He will remember a little and a little less, and he will call it dreams. Then he will forget altogether. When I passed my First Arts Examination in Calcutta that was all in

the cram-book on Wordsworth. Trailing clouds of glory, you know."

"This seems to be an exception to the rule."

"There are no exceptions to rules. Some are not so hard-looking as others, but they are all the same when you touch. If this friend of yours said so-and-so and so-and-so, indicating that he remembered all his lost lives, or one piece of a lost life, he would not be in the bank another hour. He would be what you called sack because he was mad, and they would send him to an asylum for lunatics. You can see that, my friend."

"Of course I can, but I wasn't thinking of him. His name need never appear in the story."

"Ah! I see. That story will never be written. You can try."

"I am going to."

"For your own credit and for the sake of money, *of* course?"

"No. For the sake of writing the story. On my honour that will be all."

"Even then there is no chance. You cannot play with the Gods. It is a very pretty story now. As they say, Let it go on that—I mean at that. Be quick, he will not last long."

"How do you mean?"

"What I say. He has never, so far, thought about a woman."

"Hasn't he, though!" I remembered some of Charlie's confidences.

"I mean no woman has thought about him. When

that comes; *bus—hogya*—all up! I know. There are millions of women here. Housemaids, for instance."

I winced at the thought of my story being ruined by a housemaid. And yet nothing was more probable.

Grish Chunder grinned.

"Yes—also pretty girls—cousins of his house, and perhaps *not* of his house. One kiss that he gives back again and remembers will cure all this nonsense, or else——"

"Or else what? Remember, he does not know that he knows."

"I know that. Or else, if nothing happens he will become immersed in the trade and the financial speculations like the rest. It must be so. You can see that it must be so. But the woman will come first, *I* think."

There was a rap at the door, and Charlie charged in impetuously. He had been released from office, and by the look in his eyes I could see that he had come over for a long talk; most probably with poems in his pockets. Charlie's poems were very wearying, but sometimes they led him to talk about the galley.

Grish Chunder looked at him keenly for a minute.

"I beg your pardon," Charlie said, uneasily; "I didn't know you had any one with you."

"I am going," said Grish Chunder.

He drew me into the lobby as he departed.

"That is your man," he said, quickly. "I tell you he will never speak all you wish. That is rot—bosh. But he would be most good to make to see things. Suppose now we pretend that it was only play"—I had never seen Grish Chunder so excited—"and pour the ink-pool into his hand. Eh, what do you think? I tell you that he

could see *anything* that a man could see. Let me get the ink and the camphor. He is a seer, and he will tell us very many things."

"He may be all you say, but I'm not going to trust him to your gods and devils."

"It will not hurt him. He will only feel a little stupid and dull when he wakes up. You have seen boys look into the ink-pool before."

"That is the reason why I am not going to see it any more. You'd better go, Grish Chunder."

He went, declaring far down the staircase that it was throwing away my only chance of looking into the future.

This left me unmoved, for I was concerned for the past, and no peering of hypnotised boys into mirrors and ink-pools would help me to that. But I recognised Grish Chunder's point of view and sympathised with it.

"What a big black brute that was!" said Charlie, when I returned to him. "Well, look here, I've just done a poem; did it instead of playing dominoes after lunch. May I read it?"

"Let me read it myself."

"Then you miss the proper expression. Besides, you always make my things sound as if the rhymes were all wrong."

"Read it aloud, then. You're like the rest of 'em."

Charlie mouthed me his poem, and it was not much worse than the average of his verses. He had been reading his books faithfully, but he was not pleased when I told him that I preferred my Longfellow undiluted with Charlie.

Then we began to go through the MS. line by line; Charlie parrying every objection and correction with:

"Yes, that may be better, but you don't catch what I'm driving at."

Charlie was, in one way at least, very like one kind of poet.

There was a pencil scrawl at the back of the paper, and "What's that?" I said.

"Oh, that's not poetry at all. It's some rot I wrote last night before I went to bed, and it was too much bother to hunt for rhymes; so I made it a sort of blank verse instead.

Here is Charlie's "blank verse":—

"We pulled for you when the wind was against us and the sails were low.

Will you never let us go?

We ate bread and onions when you took towns or ran aboard quickly when you were beaten back by the foe,

The captains walked up and down the deck in fair weather singing songs, but we were below,

We fainted with our chins on the oars and you did not see that we were idle for we still swung to and fro.

Will you never let us go?

The salt made the oar handles like sharkskin; our knees were cut to the bone with salt cracks, our hair was stuck to our foreheads, and our lips were cut to our gums and you whipped us because we could not row.

Will you never let us go?

But in a little time we shall run out of the portholes as the water runs along the oar-blade, and though you tell the others to row after us you will never catch us till you catch the oar-thresh and tie up the winds in the belly of the sail. Aho!

Will you never let us go?"

"H'm. What's oar-thresh, Charlie?"

"The water washed up by the oars. That's the sort of

song they might sing in the galley, y'know. Aren't you ever going to finish that story and give me some of the profits?"

"It depends on yourself. If you had told me more about your hero in the first instance it might have been finished by now. You're so hazy in your notions."

"I only want to give you the general notion of it—the knocking about from place to place and the fighting and all that. Can't you fill in the rest yourself? Make the hero save a girl on a pirate-galley and marry her or do something."

"You're a really helpful collaborator. I suppose the hero went through some few adventures before he married."

"Well, then, make him a very artful cad—a low sort of man—a sort of political man who went about making treaties and breaking them—a black-haired chap who hid behind the mast when the fighting began."

"But you said the other day that he was red-haired."

"I couldn't have. Make him black-haired, of course. You've no imagination."

Seeing that I had just discovered the entire principles upon which the half-memory falsely called imagination is based, I felt entitled to laugh, but forbore, for the sake of the tale.

"You're right. *You're* the man with the imagination. A black-haired chap in a decked ship," I said.

"No, an open ship—like a big boat."

This was maddening.

"Your ship has been built and designed, closed and decked in; you said so yourself," I protested.

"No, no, not that ship. That was open, or half decked because—— By Jove, you're right. You made me think of the hero as a red-haired chap. Of course if he were red, the ship would be an open one with painted sails."

Surely, I thought, he would remember now that he had served in two galleys at least—in a three-decked Greek one under the black-haired "political man," and again in a Viking's open sea-serpent under the man "red as a red bear" who went to Markland. The devil prompted me to speak.

"Why 'of course,' Charlie?" said I.

"I don't know. Are you making fun of me?"

The current was broken for the time being. I took up a note-book and pretended to make many entries in it.

"It's a pleasure to work with an imaginative chap like yourself," I said, after a pause. "The way that you've brought out the character of the hero is simply wonderful."

"Do you think so?" he answered, with a pleased flush. "I often tell myself that there's more in me than my mo—— than people think."

"There's an enormous amount in you."

"Then, won't you let me send an essay on The Ways of Bank-Clerks to *Tit-Bits*, and get the guinea prize?"

"That wasn't exactly what I meant, old fellow; perhaps it would be better to wait a little and go ahead with the galley-story."

"Ah, but I shan't get the credit of that. *Tit-Bits* would

publish my name and address if I win. What are you grinning at? They *would*."

"I know it. Suppose you go for a walk. I want to look through my notes about our story."

Now this reprehensible youth who left me, a little hurt and put back, might for aught he or I knew have been one of the crew of the Argo—had been certainly slave or comrade to Thorfin Karlsefne. Therefore he was deeply interested in guinea competitions. Remembering what Grish Chunder had said, I laughed aloud. The Lords of Life and Death would never allow Charlie Mears to speak with full knowledge of his pasts, and I must even piece out what he had told me with my own poor inventions while Charlie wrote of the ways of bank-clerks.

I got together and placed on one file all my notes; and the net result was not cheering. I read them a second time. There was nothing that might not have been compiled at second-hand from other people's books—except, perhaps, the story of the fight in the harbour. The adventures of a Viking had been written many times before; the history of a Greek galley-slave was no new thing, and though I wrote both, who could challenge or confirm the accuracy of my details? I might as well tell a tale of two thousand years hence. The Lords of Life and Death were as cunning as Grish Chunder had hinted. They would allow nothing to escape that might trouble or make easy the minds of men. Though I was convinced of this, yet I could not leave the tale alone. Exaltation followed reaction, not once, but twenty times, in the next few weeks. My moods varied with the March sunlight and flying clouds. By night or in the beauty

of a spring morning I perceived that I could write that tale and shift continents thereby. In the wet, windy afternoons I saw that the tale might indeed be written, but would be nothing more than a faked, false-varnished, sham-rusted piece of Wardner Street work at the end. Then I blessed Charlie in many ways—thought it was no fault of his. He seemed to be busy with prize competitions, and I saw less and less of him as the weeks went by, and the earth cracked and grew ripe to spring, and the buds swelled in their sheaths. He did not care to read or talk of what he had read, and there was a new ring of self-assertion in his voice. I hardly cared to remind him of the galley when we met; but Charlie alluded to it on every occasion, always as a story from which money was to be made.

"I think I deserve 25 per cent, don't I, at least?" he said, with beautiful frankness. "I supplied all the ideas, didn't I?"

This greediness for silver was a new side in his nature. I assumed that it had been developed in the City, where Charlie was picking up the curious nasal drawl of the underbred City man.

"When the thing's done we'll talk about it. I can't make anything of it at present. Red-haired or black-haired hero is equally difficult."

He was sitting by the fire staring at the red coals. "I can't understand what you find so difficult. It's all as clear as mud to me," he replied. A jet of gas puffed out between the bars, took light and whistled softly. "Suppose we take the red-haired hero's adventures first, from

the time that he came south to my galley and captured it and sailed to the Beaches."

I knew better than to interrupt Charlie. I was out of reach of pen and paper, and dared not move to get them lest I should break the current. The gas-jet puffed and whinnied, Charlie's voice dropped almost to a whisper, and he told a tale of the sailing of an open galley to Furdurstrandi, of sunsets on the open sea, seen under the curve of the one sail evening after evening when the galley's beak was notched into the centre of the sinking disc, and "we sailed by that, for we had no other guide," quoth Charlie. He spoke of a landing on an island and explorations in its woods, where the crew killed three men whom they found asleep under the pines. Their ghosts, Charlie said, followed the galley, swimming and choking in the water, and the crew cast lots and threw one of their number overboard as a sacrifice to the strange gods whom they had offended. Then they ate sea-weed when their provisions failed, and their legs swelled, and their leader, the red-haired man, killed two rowers who mutinied, and after a year spent among the woods they set sail for their own country, and a wind that never failed carried them back so safely that they all slept at night. This, and much more Charlie told. Sometimes the voice fell so low that I could not catch the words, though every nerve was on the strain. He spoke of their leader, the red-haired man, as a pagan speaks of his God; for it was he who cheered them and slew them impartially as he thought best for their needs; and it was he who steered them for three days among floating ice, each he crowded

with strange beasts that "tried to sail with us," said Charlie, "and we beat them back with the handles of the oars."

The gas-jet went out, a burnt coal gave way, and the fire settled down with a tiny crash to the bottom of the grate. Charlie ceased speaking, and I said no word.

"By Jove!" he said at last, shaking his head. "I've been staring at the fire till I'm dizzy. What was I going to say?"

"Something about the galley."

"I remember now. It's 25 per cent of the profits, isn't it?"

"It's anything you like when I've done the tale."

"I wanted to be sure of that. I must go now. I've—I've an appointment." And he left me.

Had my eyes not been held I might have known that that broken muttering over the fire was the swan-song of Charlie Mears. But I thought it the prelude to fuller revelation. At last and at last I should cheat the Lords of Life and Death!

When next Charlie came to me I received him with rapture. He was nervous and embarrassed, but his eyes were very full of light, and his lips a little parted.

"I've done a poem," he said; and then, quickly: "it's the best I've ever done. Read it." He thrust it into my hand and retreated toward the window.

I groaned inwardly. It would be the work of half an hour to criticise—that is to say, praise—the poem sufficiently to please Charlie. Then I had good reason to groan, for Charlie, discarding his favorite centipede metres, had launched into shorter and choppier verse,

and verse with a motive at the back of it. This is what I read:

"The day is most fair, the cheery wind
Halloos behind the hill,
Where he bends the wood as seemeth good,
And the sapling to his will!
Riot, O Wind; there is that in my blood
That would not have thee still!

"She gave me herself, O Earth, O Sky;
Gray Sea, she is mine alone!
Let the sullen boulders hear my cry,
And rejoice tho' they be but stone!

"Mine! I have won her, O good brown Earth,
Make merry! 'Tis hard on Spring;
Make merry; my love is doubly worth
All worship your fields can bring!
Let the hind that tills you feel my mirth
At the early harrowing."

"Yes, it's the early harrowing, past a doubt," I said, with a dread at my heart. Charlie smiled, but did not answer.

"Red cloud of the sunset, tell it abroad;
I am victor. Greet me, O Sun,
Dominant master and absolute lord
Over the soul of one!"

"Well?" said Charlie, looking over my shoulder.

I thought it far from well, and very evil indeed, when he silently laid a photograph on the paper—the photograph of a girl with a curly head, and a foolish slack mouth.

"Isn't it—isn't it wonderful?" he whispered, pink to the tips of his ears, wrapped in the rosy mystery of first

love. "I didn't know; I didn't think—it came like a thunderclap."

"Yes. It comes like a thunderclap. Are you very happy, Charlie?"

"My God—she—she loves me!" He sat down repeating the last words to himself. I looked at the hairless face, the narrow shoulders, already bowed by desk-work, and wondered when, where, and how he had loved in his past lives.

"What will your mother say?" I asked, cheerfully.

"I don't care a damn what she says."

At twenty the things for which one does not care a damn should, properly, be many, but one must not include mothers in the list. I told him this gently; and he described Her, even as Adam must have described to the newly named beasts the glory and tenderness and beauty of Eve. Incidentally I learned that She was a tobacconist's assistant with a weakness for pretty dress, and had told him four or five times already that She had never been kissed by a man before.

Charlie spoke on and on, and on; while I, separated from him by thousands of years, was considering the beginnings of things. Now I understood why the Lords of Life and Death shut the doors so carefully behind us. It is that we may not remember our first wooings. Were it not so, our world would be without inhabitants in a hundred years.

"Now, about that galley-story," I said, still more cheerfully, in a pause in the rush of the speech.

Charlie looked up as though he had been hit. "The gal-

ley—what galley? Good heavens, don't joke, man! This is serious! You don't know how serious it is!"

Grish Chunder was right. Charlie had tasted the love of woman that kills remembrance, and the finest story in the world would never be written.

THE END.

MRS. HAUKSBEE SITS OUT.

AN UNHISTORICAL EXTRAVAGANZA.

PERSONS CHIEFLY INTERESTED.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA.

CHARLES HILTON HAWLEY *(lieutenant at large).*

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. SCRIFFSHAW *(not so much at large).*

MAJOR DECKER *(a persuasive Irishman).*

PEROO *(an Aryan butler).*

MRS. HAUKSBEE *(a lady with a will of her own).*

MRS. SCRIFFSHAW *(a lady who believes she has a will of her own).*

MAY HOLT *(niece of the above).*

ASSUNTA *(an Aryan lady's-maid).*

Aides-de-Camp, Dancers, Horses, and Devils as required.

SCENE.—*The imperial city of Simla on a pine-clad mountain: seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. Grey roofs of houses peering through green; white clouds going to bed in the valley below; purple clouds of sunset sitting on the peaks above. Smell of wood smoke and pine cones. A curtained verandah-room in Mrs. Hauksbee's house, overlooking Simla, shows* MRS. HAUKSBEE, *in black cachemire tea-gown opening over*

cream front, seated in a red-cushioned chair, her foot on a Khokand rug, Russian china tea-things on red-lacquered table beneath red-shaded lamps. On a cushion at her feet, MISS HOLT—*grey riding-habit, soft grey-felt terai hat, blue and gold puggree, buff gauntlets in lap, and glimpse of spurred riding-boot. They have been talking as the twilight gathers.* MRS. HAUKSBEE *crosses over to piano in a natural pause of the conversation, and begins to play.*

MAY.—*(Without changing her position.)* Yes. That's nice. Play something.

MRS. H.—What?

MAY.—Oh! anything. Only I don't want to hear about sighing over tombs, and saying "Nevermore."

MRS. H.—Have you ever known me to do that? May, you're in one of your little tempers this afternoon.

MAY.—So would a saint be. I've told you why. Horrid old *thing!*—isn't she?

MRS. H.—*(Without prelude.)*

Fair Eve knelt close to the guarded gate in the hush of an Eastern spring,
She saw the flash of the Angel's sword, the gleam of the Angel's wing—

MAY.—*(Impetuously.)* And now *you're* laughing at me!

MRS. H.—*(Shaking her head, continues the song for a verse; then crescendo.)*

And because she was so beautiful, and because she could not see
How fair were the pure white cyclamens crushed lying at her knee.

(That's the society of your aunt, my dear.)

He plucked a rose from the Eden Tree where the four great
rivers met.

MAY.—Yes. I know you're laughing at me. Now somebody's going to die, of course. They always do.

MRS. H.—No. Wait and see what is going to happen. *(The puckers pass out of May's face as she listens.)*

And though for many a cycle past that Rose in the dust hath lain
With her who bore it upon her breast when she passed from
grief and pain,

(Retard.)—

There was never a daughter of Eve but once, ere the tale of her
years be done,
Shall know the scent of the Eden Rose, but once beneath the
sun!
Though the years may bring her joy or pain, fame, sorrow, or
sacrifice,
The hour that brought her the scent of the Rose she lived it
in Paradise!

(Concludes with arpeggio chords.)

MAY.—*(Shuddering.)* Ah! Don't. How good that is! What is it?

MRS. H.—Something called "The Eden Rose." An old song to a new setting.

MAY.—Play it again!

MRS. H.—(I thought it would tell.) No, dear. *(Returning to her place by the tea-things.)* And so that amiable aunt of yours won't let you go to the dance?

MAY.—She says dancing's wicked and sinful; and it's only a Volunteer ball, after all.

MRS. H.—Then why are you so anxious to go?

MAY.—Because she says I mustn't! Isn't that sufficient reason? And because—

MRS. H.—Ah, it's that "because" I want to hear about, dear.

MAY.—Because I choose. Mrs. Hauksbee—*dear* Mrs. Hauksbee—you will help me, won't you?

MRS. H.—*(Slowly.)* Ye-es. Because *I* choose. Well?

MAY.—In the first place, you'll take me under your wing, won't you? And, in the second, you'll keep me there, won't you?

MRS. H.—That will depend a great deal on the Hawley boy's pleasure, won't it?

MAY.—*(Flushing.)* Char—Mr. Hawley has nothing whatever to do with it.

MRS. H.—Of course not. But what will your aunt say?

MAY.—She will be angry with *me*, but not with you. She is pious—oh! so pious!—and she would give anything to be put on that lady's committee for—what is it?—giving pretty dresses to half-caste girls. Lady Bieldar is the secretary, and she won't speak to Aunt on the Mall. You're Lady Bieldar's friend. Aunt daren't quarrel with you, and, besides, if I come here after dinner to-night, how are you to know that everything isn't correct?

MRS. H.—On your own pretty head be the talking to! I'm willing to chaperon to an unlimited extent.

MAY.—Bless you! and I'll love you *always* for it!

MRS. H.—There, again, the Hawley boy might have something to say. You've been a well-conducted little maiden so far, May. Whence this sudden passion for Volunteer balls? *(Turning down lamp and lowering voice as she takes the girl's hand.)* Won't you tell me? I'm not very young, but I'm not a grim griffin, and I think I'd understand, dear.

MAY.—*(After a pause, and swiftly.)* His leave is nearly ended. He goes down to the plains to his regiment the day after to-morrow, and—

MRS. H.—Has he said anything?

MAY.—I don't know. I don't think so. Don't laugh at me, please! But I believe it would nearly break my heart if he didn't.

MRS. H.—*(Smiling to herself.)* Poor child! And how long has this been going on?

MAY.—Ever so long! Since the beginning of the world—or the beginning of the season. I couldn't help it. I didn't want to help it. And last time we met I was just as rude as I could be—and—and he thought I meant it.

MRS. H.—How strange! Seeing that he is a man, too *(half aloud)*, and probably with experiences of his own!

MAY.—*(Dropping Mrs. H.'s hand.)* I don't believe that, and—I won't. He couldn't!

MRS. H.—No, dear. Of course he hasn't had experiences. Why should he? I was only teasing! But when do I pick you up to-night, and how?

MAY.—Aunt's dining out somewhere—with goody-

goody people. I dine alone with Uncle John—and he sleeps after dinner. I shall dress then. I simply daren't order my 'rickshaw. The trampling of four coolies in the verandah would wake the dead. I shall have Dandy brought round quietly, and slip away.

MRS. H.—But won't riding crumple your frock horribly?

MAY.—*(Rising.)* Not in the least, if you know how. I've ridden ten miles to a dance, and come in as fresh as though I had just left my brougham. A plain head hunting-saddle—swing up carefully—throw a waterproof over the skirt and an old shawl over the body, and there you are! Nobody notices in the dark, and Dandy knows when he feels a high heel that he must behave.

MRS. H.—And what are you wearing?

MAY.—My very, very bestest—slate body, smoke-coloured tulle skirt, and the loveliest steel-worked little shoes that ever were. Mother sent them. She doesn't know Aunt's views. That, and awfully pretty yellow roses—teeny-weeny ones. And you'll wait for me here, won't you—you angel!—at half-past nine? *(Shortens habit and whirls Mrs. H. down the verandah. Winds up with a kiss.)* There!

MRS. H.—*(Holding her at arm's-length and looking into her eyes.)* And the next one will be given to—

MAY.—*(Blushing furiously.)* Uncle John—when I get home.

MRS. H.—Hypocrite! Go along, and be happy! *(As May mounts her horse in the garden.)* At half-past

nine, then? And can you curl your own wig? But I shall be here to put the last touches to you.

MRS. H.—*(In the verandah alone, as the stars come out.)* Poor child! Dear child! And Charley Hawley, too! God gi'e us a good conceit of ourselves; but I think they are made for each other! I wonder whether that Eurasian dress-reform committee is susceptible of improvement? I wonder whether—O youth, youth!

Enter PEROO, *the butler, with a note on a tray.*

MRS. H.—*(Reading.)* "Help! Help! Help! The decorations are vile—the Volunteers are fighting over them. The roses are just beginning to come in. Mrs. Mallowe has a headache. I am on a step-ladder and the verge of tears! Come and restore order, if you have any regard for me! Bring things and dress; and dine with us.—Constance." How vexatious! But I must go, I suppose. I *hate* dressing in other people's rooms—and Lady Bieldar takes all the chairs. But I'll tell Assunta to wait for May. *(Passes into house, gives orders, and departs. The clock-hands in the dining-room mark half-past seven.)*

Enter ASSUNTA, *the lady's maid, to* PEROO *squatting on the hearthrug.*

ASSUNTA.—Peroo, there is an order that I am to remain on hand till the arrival of a young lady *(Squats at his side.)*

PEROO.—Hah!

ASSUNTA.—I do not desire to wait so long. I wish to go to my house.

PEROO.—Hah!

ASSUNTA.—My house is in the bazaar. There is an urgency that I should go there.

PEROO.—To meet a lover?

ASSUNTA.—No—black beast! To tend my children, who be honest born. Canst thou say that of thine?

PEROO.—*(Without emotion.)* That is a lie, and thou art a woman of notoriously immoral carriage.

ASSUNTA.—For this, my husband, who is a man, shall break thy lizard's back with a bamboo.

PEROO.—For that, I, who am much honoured and trusted in this house, can, by a single word, secure his dismissal, and, owing to my influence among the servants of this town, can raise the bad name against ye both. Then ye will starve for lack of employ.

ASSUNTA.—*(Fawning.)* That is true. Thy honour is as great as thy influence, and thou art an esteemed man. Moreover, thou art beautiful; especially as to thy moustachios.

PEROO.—So other women, and of higher caste than thou, sweeper's wife, have told me.

ASSUNTA.—The moustachios of a fighting-man—of a very swashbuckler! Ahi! Peroo, how many hearts hast thou broken with thy fine coat and those so huge moustachios?

PEROO.—*(Twirling moustache.)* One or two—two or three. It is a matter of common talk in the bazaars. I speak not of the matter myself. *(Hands her betel nut and lime wrapped in the leaf. They chew in silence.)*

ASSUNTA.—Peroo!

PEROO.—Hah!

ASSUNTA.—I greatly desire to go away, and not to wait.

PEROO.—Go, then!

ASSUNTA.—But what wilt thou say to the mistress?

PEROO.—That thou hast gone.

ASSUNTA.—Nay, but thou must say that one came crying with news that my littlest babe was smitten with fever, and that I fled weeping. Else it were not wise to go.

PEROO.—Be it so! But I shall need a little tobacco to solace me while I wait for the return of the mistress alone.

ASSUNTA.—It shall come; and it shall be of the best. (A snake is a snake, and a bearer is a thieving ape till he dies!) I go. It was the fever of the child—the littlest babe of all—remember. (And now, if my lover finds I am late, he will beat me, judging that I have been unfaithful.)

(Exit.)

At half-past nine enter tumultuously May, a heavy shawl over her shoulders, skirt of smoke-coloured tulle showing beneath.

MAY.—Mrs. Hauksbee! Oh, she isn't here. And I dared not get Aunt's ayah to help. She would have told Uncle John—and I can't lace it myself. (PEROO *hands note, May reads.*) "So sorry. Dragged off to put the last touches to the draperies. Assunta will look after you." Sorry! You may well be sorry, wicked woman! Draperies, indeed! You never thought of mine, and—all up the back, too. *(To* PEROO.*)* Where's Assunta?

PEROO.—*(Bowing to the earth.)* By your honoured favour, there came a man but a short time ago crying that the ayah's baby was smitten with fever, and she fled, weeping, to tend it. Her house is a mile hence. Is there any order?

MAY.—How desperately annoying! *(Looking into fire, her eyes softening.)* Her baby! *(With a little shiver, passing right hand before eyes.)* Poor woman! *(A pause.)* But what am *I* to do? I can't even creep into the cloak-room as I am, and trust to someone to put me to rights; and the shawl's a horrid old plaid! Who invented dresses to lace up the back? It must have been a man! I'd like to put him into one! What *am* I to do? Perhaps the Colley-Haughton girls haven't left yet. They're sure to be dining at home. I might run up to their rooms and wait till they come. Eva wouldn't tell, I know. *(Remounts Dandy, and rides up the hill to house immediately above, enters glazed hall cautiously, and calls up staircase in an agonized whisper, huddling her shawl about her.)* Jenny! Eva! *Eva!* Jenny! They're out too, and, of course, their ayah's gone!

SIR HENRY COLLEY-HAUGHTON.—*(Opening door of dining-room, where he has been finishing an after-dinner cigar, and stepping into hall.)* I thought I heard a—Miss Holt! I didn't know you were going with my girls. They've just left.

MAY.—*(Confusedly.)* I wasn't. I didn't—that is, it was partly my fault. *(With desperate earnestness.)* *Is* Lady Haughton in?

SIR HENRY.—She's with the girls. Is there any

thing that I can do? I'm going to the dance in a minute. Perhaps I might ride with you!

MAY.—Not for worlds! Not for anything! It was a mistake. I hope the girls are quite well.

SIR HENRY.—*(With bland wonder.)* Perfectly, thanks. *(Moves through hall towards horse.)*

MAY.—*(Mounting in haste.)* No! Please don't hold my stirrup! I can manage perfectly, thanks! *(Canters out of the garden to side-road shadowed by pines. Sees beneath her the lights of Simla town in orderly constellations, and on a bare ridge the illuminated bulk of the Simla Townhall shining like a cut-paper transparency. The main road is fire-fly lighted with the moving 'rickshaw lamps all climbing towards the Townhall. The wind brings up a few bars of a waltz. A monkey in the darkness of the wood wakes and croons dolefully.)* And now, where in the world am I to go? May, you bad girl! this all comes of disobeying aunts and wearing dresses that lace up the back, and—trusting Mrs. Hauksbee. Everybody is going. I must wait a little till that crowd has thinned. Perhaps—perhaps Mrs. Lefevre might help me. It's a horrid road to her poky little house, but she's very kind, even if she is pious. *(Thrusts Dandy along an almost inaccessible path; halts in the shadow of a clump of rhododendron, and watches the lighted windows of Mrs. Lefevre's small cottage.)* Oh, horror! So that's where Aunt is dining! Back, Dandy, back! Dandy, dearest, step softly! *(Regains road, panting.)* I'll never forgive Mrs. Hauksbee!—never! And there's the band beginning "God Save the Queen,"

and that means the Viceroy has come; and Charlie will think I've disappointed him on purpose, because I was so rude last time. And I'm all but ready. Oh! it's cruel, cruel! I'll go home, and I'll go straight to bed, and Charlie may dance with any other horrid girl he likes! *(The last of the 'rickshaw lights pass her as she reaches the main road. Clatter of stones overhead, and squeak of a saddle as a big horse picks his way down a steep path above, and a robust baritone chants:*

> Our King went forth to Normandie
> With power of might and chivalry;
> The Lord for him wrought wonderously,
> Therefore now may England cry
> *Deo Gratias!*

Swings into main road, and the young moon shows a glimpse of the cream and silver of the Deccan Irregular Horse uniform under rider's opened cloak.)

MAY.—*(Leaning forward and taking reins short.)* That's Charlie! What a splendid voice! Just like the big, strong angel's! I wonder what he is so happy about? How he sits his horse! and he hasn't anything round his neck, and he'll catch his death of cold! If he sees me riding in this direction he may stop and ask me why, and I can't explain. Fate's against me to-night. I'll canter past quickly. Bless you, Charlie! *(Canters up the road under the shadow of the pines as* HAWLEY *canters down. Dandy's hoofs keep the tune, "There was never a daughter of Eve," etc. All Earth wakes, and tells the stars. The Occupants of the Little Simla cemetery stir in their sleep.)*

PINES OF THE CEMETERY.—*(To the Occupants.)*

Lie still, lie still! O earth to earth returning!
Brothers beneath, what wakes you to your pain?

THE OCCUPANTS.—*(Underground.)*

Earth's call to earth—the old unstifled yearning
To clutch our lives again.

By summer shrivelled and by winter frozen,
Ye cannot thrust us wholly from the light.
Do we not know who were of old his chosen
Love rides abroad to-night?

By all that was our own of joy or sorrow,
By Pain foredone, Desire snatched away!
By hopeless weight of that unsought To-morrow,
Which is our lot to-day,

By vigil in our chambers ringing hollow,
With Love's foot overhead to mock our dearth,
We who have come would speak for those who follow—
Be pitiful, O Earth!

THE DEVIL OF CHANCE, *in the similitude of a grey ape, runs out on the branch of an overhanging tree, singing:*

On a road that is pied as a panther's hide
The shadows flicker and dance.
And the leaves that make them, my hand shall shake them—
The hand of the Devil of Chance.

Echo from the Snows on the Thibet road:

The little blind Devil of Chance.

THE DEVIL.—*(Swinging branch furiously.)*

Yea, chance and confusion and error
The chain of their destiny wove;
And the horse shall be smitten with terror,
And the maiden made sure of her love!

(Dandy shies at the waving shadows, and cannons into Hawley's horse, off shoulder to off shoulder. HAWLEY *catches the reins.)*

THE DEVIL.—*(Above, letting the branch swing back.)*

On a road that is pied as a panther's hide
The souls of the twain shall dance!
And the passions that shake them, my hand shall wake them—
The hand of the Devil of Chance.

ECHO.—

The little blind Devil of Chance.

HAWLEY.—*(Recovering himself.)*—Confou—Er—hm! Oh, Miss Holt! And to what am I indebted for this honour?

MAY.—Dandy shied. I hope you aren't hurt?

ALL EARTH, THE FLOWERS, THE TREES, AND THE MOONLIGHT.—*(Together to* HAWLEY.*)* Speak now, or for ever hold your peace!

HAWLEY.—*(Drawing reins tighter, keeping his horse's off shoulder to Dandy's side.)* My fault entirely. (It comes easily now.) Not much hurt, are you *(leaning off side, and putting his arm round her.)* My May? It's awfully mean, I know, but I meant to speak weeks ago, only you never gave a fellow the chance—'specially last time. *(Moistens his lips.)* I'm not fit—I'm utterly—*(in a gruff whisper)*—I'm utterly unworthy, and—and you aren't angry, May, are you? I thought you might have cared a little bit. *Do* you care, darl——

MAY.—*(Her head falling on his right shoulder. The arm tightens.)* Oh! don't—don't!

HAWLEY.—*(Nearly tumbling off his horse.)* Only one, darling. We can talk at the dance.

MAY.—But I can't go to the dance!

HAWLEY.—*(Taking Another promptly as head is raised.)* Nonsense! You *must*, dear, now. Remember I go down to my regiment the day after to-morrow, and I sha'n't see you again. *(Catches glimpse of steel-grey slipper in stirrup.)* Why, you're dressed for it!

MAY.—Yes, but I can't go! I've—torn my dress.

HAWLEY.—Run along and put on a new one: only be quick. Shall I wait here?

MAY.—No! Go away! Go at once!

HAWLEY.—You'll find me opposite the cloak-room.

MAY.—Yes, yes! Anything! Good-night!

HAWLEY *canters up the road, and the song breaks out again fortissimo.*

MAY.—*(Absently, picking up reins.)* Yes, indeed. My king went forth to Normandie; and—I shall never get there. Let me think, though! Let me think! It's all over now—all over! I wonder what I ought to have said! I wonder what I did say! Hold up, Dandy; you need someone to order you about. It's nice to have someone nice to order you about. *(Flicks horse, who capers.)* Oh, don't jiggit, Dandy! I feel so trembly and faint. But I sha'n't see him for ever so long . . . But we understand now. *(Dandy turns down path to Mrs. Scriffshaw's house.)* And I wanted to go to the dance so much before, and now I want to go worse than ever! *(Dismounts, runs*

into house and weeps with her head on the drawing-room table.)

Enter SCRIFFSHAW, *grizzled Lieutenant-Colonel.*

SCRIFFSHAW.—May! Bless my soul, what's all this? What's all this? *(Shawl slips.)* And, bless my soul, what's all *this?*

MAY.—N-nothing. Only I'm miserable and wretched.

SCRIFFSHAW.—But where have you been? I thought you were in your own room.

MAY.—*(With icy desperation.)* I was, till you had fallen asleep. Then I dressed myself for a dance—this dance that Aunt has forbidden me to go to. Then I took Dandy out, and then—*(collapsing and wriggling her shoulders)*—doesn't it show enough?

SCRIFFSHAW.—*(Critically.)* It does, dear. I thought those things—er—laced up the front.

MAY.—This one doesn't. That's all. *(Weeps afresh.)*

SCRIFFSHAW.—Then what are you going to do? Bless my soul, May, don't cry!

MAY.—I *will* cry, and I'll sit here till Aunt comes home, and then she'll see what I've been trying to do, and I'll tell her that I hate her, and ask her to send me back to Calcutta!

SCRIFFSHAW.—But—but if she finds you in this dress she'll be furiously angry with *me!*

MAY.—For allowing me to put it on? So much the better. Then you'll know what it is to be scolded by Aunt.

SCRIFFSHAW.—I knew that before you were born.

(Standing by May's bowed head.) (She's my sister's child, and I don't think Alice has the very gentlest way with girls. I'm sure her mother wouldn't object if we took her to twenty dances. She can't find us amusing company—and Alice will be simply beside herself under any circumstances. I know her tempers after those "refreshing evenings" at the Lefevres'.) May, dear, don't cry like that!

MAY.—I will! I will! I *will!* You—you don't know why!

SCRIFFSHAW.—*(Revolving many matters.)* We may just as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.

MAY.—*(Raising head swiftly.)* Uncle *John!*

SCRIFFSHAW.—You see, my dear, your Aunt can't be a scrap more angry than she will be if you don't take off that frock. She looks at the intention of things.

MAY.—Yes; disobedience, of course (And I'll only obey one person in the wide living world). Well?

SCRIFFSHAW.—Your Aunt may be back at any moment. *I* can't face her.

MAY.—Well?

SCRIFFSHAW.—Let's go to the dance. I'll jump into my uniform, and then see if I can't put those things straight. We may *just* as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb. (And there's the chance of a rubber.) Give me five minutes, and we'll fly. *(Dives into his room, leaving* MAY *astounded.)*

SCRIFFSHAW.—*(From the room.)* Tell them to bring round Dolly Bobs. We can get away quicker on horseback.

MAY.—But really, Uncle, hadn't you better go in a 'rickshaw? Aunt says—

SCRIFFSHAW.—We're in open mutiny now. We'll ride. *(Emerges in full uniform.)* There!

MAY.—Oh, Uncle John! You look perfectly delightful—and so martial, too!

SCRIFFSHAW.—I was martial once. Suppose your Aunt came in? Let me see if I can lace those things of yours. That's too tight—eh?

MAY.—No! Much, much tighter. You must bring the edges together. Indeed you must. And lace it *quick!* Oh! what if Aunt should come? Tie it in a knot. Any sort of knot.

SCRIFFSHAW.—*(Lacing bodice after a fashion of his own devising.)* Yes—yes! I see! Confound! That's all right! *(They pass into the garden and mount their horses.)* Let go her head! By Jove, May, how well you ride!

MAY.—*(As they race through the shadows neck and neck.)* (Small blame to me. I'm riding to my love.) Go along, Dandy boy! Wasn't that Aunt's 'rickshaw that passed just now? She'll come to the dance and fetch us back.

SCRIFFSHAW.—*(After the gallop.)* Who cares?

SCENE.—*Main ball-room of the Simla Townhall—dancing-floor grooved and tongued teak, vaulted roof, and gallery round the walls. Four hundred people dispersed in couples. Banners, bayonet stars on walls; red and gold, blue and gold, chocolate, buff, rifle-green, black, and other uniforms under glare of*

a few hundred lamps. Cloak and supper rooms at the sides, with alleys leading to Chinese-lanterned verandahs. HAWLEY *at entrance receives* MAY *as she drops from her horse and passes towards cloak-room.*

HAWLEY.—*(As he pretends to rearrange shawl.)* Oh, my love, my love, my love!

MAY.—*(Her eyes on the ground.)* Let me go and get these things off. I'm trying to control my eyes, but it is written on my face. *(Dashes into cloak-room.)*

NEWLY-MARRIED WIFE OF CAPTAIN OF ENGINEERS TO HUSBAND.—No need to ask what has happened *there,* Dick.

HUSBAND.—No, bless 'em both, whoever they are!

HAWLEY.—*(Under his breath.)* Damn his impertinence!

May comes from cloak-room, having completely forgotten to do more than look at her face and hair in the glass.

HAWLEY.—Here's the programme, dear!

MAY.—*(Returning it with pretty gesture of surrender.)* Here's the programme—dear!

(HAWLEY draws line from top to bottom, initials, and returns card.)

MAY.—You can't! It's perfectly awful! But—I should have been angry if you hadn't. *(Taking his arm.)* Is it wrong to say that?

HAWLEY.—It sounds delicious. We can sit out all the squares and dance all the round dances. There are heaps of square dances at Volunteer balls. Come along.

MAY.—One minute! I want to tell my chaperon something.

HAWLEY.—Come along! You belong to me now.

MAY.—*(Her eyes seeking* MRS. HAUKSBEE, *who is seated on an easy-chair by an alcove.)* But it was so awfully sudden!

HAWLEY.—My dear infant! When a girl throws herself literally into a man's arms—

MAY.—I didn't! Dandy shied.

HAWLEY.—Don't shy to conclusions. That man is never going to let her go. Come!

MAY *catches Mrs. H.'s eye. Telegraphs a volume, and receives by return two. Turns to go with* HAWLEY.

MRS. H.—*(As she catches sight of back of* MAY'S *dress.)* Oh, horror! Assunta shall die to-morrow! *(Sees* SCRIFFSHAW *fluctuating uneasily among the chaperons, and following his niece's departure with the eye of an artist.)*

MRS. H.—*(Furiously.)* Colonel Scriffshaw, you—*you* did that?

SCRIFFSHAW.—*(Imbecilely.)* The lacing? Yes, I think it will hold.

MRS. H.—You monster! Go and tell her. No, don't. *(Falling back in chair.)* I have lived to see every proverb I believed in a lie. The maid has forgotten her attire! (What a handsome couple they make! Anyhow, he doesn't care, and she doesn't know.) How did *you* come here, Colonel Scriffshaw?

SCRIFFSHAW.—Strictly against orders *(uneasily)*. I'm afraid I shall have my wife looking for me.

MRS. H.—I fancy you will. *(Sees reflection of herself in the mirrors—black-lace dinner dress, blood-red poinsettia at shoulder and girdle to secure single brace of black lace. Silver shoes, silver-handled black fan.)* (You're looking pretty to-night, dear. I wish your husband were here.) *(Aloud, to drift of expectant men.)* No, no, no! For the hundredth time, Mrs. Hauksbee is not dancing this evening. (Her hands are full, or she is in error. Now, the chances are that I sha'n't see May again till it is time to go, and I may see Mrs. Scriffshaw at any moment.) Colonel, *will* you take me to the supper-room? The hall's chilly without perpetual soups. *(Goes out on Colonel's arm. Passing the cloak-room, sees portion of Mrs. Scriffshaw's figure.)* (Before me the Deluge!) If I were you, Colonel Scriffshaw, I'd go to the whist-room, and—stay there. *(S. follows the line of her eye, and blanches as he flies.)* She *has* come—to—take them home, and she is quite capable of it. What shall I do? *(Looks across the supper tables. Sees* MAJOR DECKER, *a big black-haired Irishman, and attacks him among the meringues.)* Major Decker! Dear Major Decker! If ever I was a friend of yours, help me now!

MAJOR D.—I will, indeed. What is it?

MRS. H.—*(Walking him back deftly in the direction of the cloak room door.)* I want you to be very kind to a very dear friend of mine—a Mrs. Scriffshaw. She doesn't come to dances much, and, being very sensitive, she feels neglected if no one asks her to dance. She really waltzes divinely, though you might not think it. There she is, walking out of the cloak-room now, in

the high dress. *Please* come and be introduced *(under her eyelashes)*. You're an Irishman, Major, and you've got a way with you. *(Planting herself in front of* MRS. S.) Mrs. Scriffshaw, may I wah—wah—wah Decker?—wah—wah—wah Decker?—Mrs. Scuffles. *(Flies hastily.)* Saved for a moment! And now, if I can enlist the Viceroy on my side, I may do something.

MAJOR D.—*(To* MRS. S.*)* The pleasure of a dance with you, Mrs. Scruffun?

MRS. SCRIFFSHAW.—*(Backing, and filling in the doorway.)* Sirr!

MAJOR D.—*(Smiling persuasively.)* You've forgotten me, I see! I had the pleasure o' meeting you—(there's a missionary in every line o' that head)—at—at—the last Presbyterian Conference.

MRS. S.—*(Strict Wesleyan Methodist.)* I was never there.

MAJOR D.—*(Retiring en echelon towards two easy-chairs.)* Were ye not, now? That's queer. Let's sit down here, and talk over it, and, perhaps, we will strike a chord of mutual reminiscence. *(Sits down exhaustedly.)* And if it was not at the Conference, where was it?

MRS. S.—*(Icily, looking for her husband.)* I apprehend that our paths in the world are widely different.

MAJOR D.—(My faith! They are!) Not the least in the world. (MRS. S. *shudders.)* Are you sitting in a draught? Shall we try a turn at the waltz now?

MRS. S.—*(Rising to the expression of her abhorrence.)* My husband is Colonel Scriffshaw. I should be much obliged if you would find him for me.

MAJOR D.—*(Throwing up his chin.)* Scriffshaw, begad! I saw him just now at the other end of the room. (I'll get a dance out of the old woman, or I'll die for it.) We'll just waltz up there an' inquire. *(Hurls* MRS. S. *into the waltz. Revolves ponderously.)* (Mrs. Hauksbee has perjured herself—but not on my behalf. She's ruining my instep.) No, he's not at this end. *(Circling slowly.)* We'll just go back to our chairs again. If he won't dance with so magnificent a dancer as his wife, he doesn't deserve to be here, or anywhere else. (That's my one sound knee-cap she's kicking now.) *(Halts at point of departure.)* And now we'll watch for him here.

MRS. S.—*(Panting.)* Abominable! Infamous!

MAJOR D.—Oh, no. He's not so bad as that! Prob'ly playin' whist in the kyard-rooms. Will I look for him? *(Departs, leaving* MRS. S. *purple in the face among the chaperons—and passes* MRS. H. *in close conversation with a partner.)*

MAJOR D.—*(To* MRS. H., *not noticing her partner.)* She's kicked me to pieces. She can dance no more than a Windsor chair, an' now she's sent me to look for her husband. You owe me something for this. . . . (The Viceroy, by Jove!)

MRS. H.—*(Turning to her partner and concluding story.)* A base betrayal of confidence, of course; but the woman's absolutely without tact, and capable of making a scene at a minute's notice, besides doing her best to wreck the happiness of two lives after her treatment at Major Decker's hands. But on the dress re-

form committee, and under proper supervision, she would be most valuable.

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India.—*(Diplomatic uniform, stars, etc.)* But surely the work of keeping order among the waltzers is entrusted to abler hands. I cannot, cannot fight! I—I only direct armies.

Mrs. H.—No. But your Excellency has not quite grasped the situation. *(Explains it with desperate speed, one eye on* Mrs. S. *panting on her chair.)* So you see! Husband fled to the whist-room for refuge; girl with her lover, who goes down the day after to-morrow; and *she* is loose. She will be neither to hold nor to bind after the Major's onslaught, save by you. And on a committee—she really would . . .

His Excellency.—I see. I am penetrated with an interest in Eurasian dress reform. I never felt so alive to the importance of committees before. *(Screwing up his eyes to see across the room.)* But pardon me—my sight is not so good as it has been—which of that line of Mothers in Israel do I attack? The wearied one who is protesting with a fan against this scene of riot and dissipation?

Mrs. H.—Can you doubt for a moment? I'm afraid your task is a heavy one, but the happiness of two—

His Excellency.—*(Wearily.)* Hundred and fifty million souls? Ah, yes! And yet they say a Viceroy is overpaid. Let us advance. It will not talk to me about it's husband's unrecognized merits, will it? You have no idea how inevitably the conversation drifts in

that direction when I am left alone with a lady. They tell me of Poor Tom, or Dear Dick, or Persecuted Paul, before I have time to explain that these things are really regulated by my secretaries. On my honour, I sometimes think that the ladies of India are polyandrous!

MRS. H.—Would it be so difficult to credit that they love their husbands?

HIS EXCELLENCY.—That also is possible! One of your many claims to my regard is that you have never mentioned your husband.

MRS. H.—*(Sweetly.)* No; and as long as he is where he is I have not the least intention of doing so.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(As they approach the row of eminently self-conscious chaperons.)* And, by the way, where is he?

MRS. H. *lays her fan lightly over her heart, bows her head, and moves on.*

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(As the chaperons become more self-conscious, drifting to vacant chair at* MRS. S.'S *side.)* That also is possible. I do not recall having seen him elsewhere, at any rate. *(Watching* MRS. S.*)* How very like twenty thousand people that I could remember if I had time! *(Glides into vacant chair.* MRS. S. *colours to the temples; chaperons exchange glances. In a voice of strained honey.)* May I be pardoned for attacking you so brusquely on matters of public importance, Mrs. Scriffshaw? But my times are not my own, and I have heard so much about the good work you carry on so successfully? (When she has quite recovered I may learn what that work was.)

MRS. S., *in tones meant for the benefit of all the chaperons, discourses volubly, with little gasps, of her charitable mission work.*

HIS EXCELLENCY.—How interesting! Of course, quite natural! What we want most on our dress reform committee is a firm hand and enormous local knowledge. Men are *so* tactless. You have been too proud, Mrs. Scriffshaw, to offer us your help in that direction. So, you see, I come to ask it as a favour. *(Gives* MRS. S. *to understand that the Eurasian dress reform committee cannot live another hour without her help and comfort.)*

FIRST AIDE.—*(By doorway, within easy eye-reach of* HIS EXCELLENCY.*)* What in the world is His Excellency tackling now?

SECOND AIDE.—*(In attitude of fascination.)* Looks as if it had been a woman once. Anyhow, it isn't amusing him. I know that smile when he is in acute torment.

MRS. H.—*(Coming up behind them.)* "Now the Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field!"

SECOND AIDE.—*(Turning.)* Ah! Your programme full, of course, Mrs. Hauksbee?

MRS. H.—I'm not dancing, and you should have asked me before. You Aides have no manners.

FIRST AIDE.—You must excuse him. Hugh's a blighted being. He's watching somebody dance with somebody else, and somebody's wanting to dance with him.

MRS. H.—*(Keenly, under her eyebrows.)* You're too young for that rubbish.

SECOND AIDE.—It's his imagination. *He's* all right

but Government House duty is killing me. My heart's in the plains with a dear little, fat little, lively little nine-foot tiger. I want to sit out over that kill instead of watching over His Excellency.

MRS. H—Don't they let the Aides out to play, then?

SECOND AIDE.—Not me. I've got to do most of Duggy's work while he runs after—

MRS. H.—Never mind! A discontented Aide is a perpetual beast. One of you boys will take me to a chair and then leave me. No, I don't want the delights of your conversation.

SECOND AIDE.—*(As first goes off.)* When Mrs. Hauksbee is attired in holy simplicity, it generally means—larks!

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(To* MRS. SCRIFFSHAW.*)* . . . And so we all wanted to see more of you. I felt I was taking no liberty when I dashed into affairs of State at so short a notice. It was with the greatest difficulty I could find you. Indeed, I hardly believed my eyes when I saw you waltzing so divinely just now. (She will first protest; and next perjure herself.)

MRS. S.—*(Weakly.)* But I assure you—

HIS EXCELLENCY.—My eyes are not so old that they cannot recognize a good dancer when they see one.

MRS. S.—*(With a simper.)* But only once in a way, Your Excellency.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—(Of course.) That is too seldom—much too seldom. You should set our younger folk an example. These slow swirling waltzes are tiring. I prefer—as I see you do—swifter measures.

MAJOR D.—*(Entering main door in strict charge of*

SCRIFFSHAW, *who fears the judgment.)* Yes! She sent me to look for you, after giving me *the* dance of the evening. I'll never forget it!

SCRIFFSHAW.—*(His jaw dropping.)* My—wife—danced—with—*you!* I mean—anybody!

MAJOR D.—Anybody! Aren't I somebody enough? *(Looking across room.)* Faith! You're right, though! There she is in a corner, flirting with the Viceroy. I was not good enough for her. Well, it's no use to interrupt 'em.

SCRIFFSHAW.—Certainly not! We'll—we'll get a drink and go back to the whist-rooms. (Alice must be mad! At any rate, I'm safe, I suppose!)

HIS EXCELLENCY *rises and fades away from* MRS. SCRIFFSHAW'S *side after a long and particular pressure of the hand.* MRS. S. *throws herself back in her chair with the air of one surfeited with similar attentions, and the chaperons begin to talk.*

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(Leaning over* MRS. H.'S *chair with an absolutely expressionless countenance.)* She is a truly estimable lady—one that I shall count it an honour to number among my friends. No! She will not move from her place, because I have expressed a hope that, a little later on in the dance, we may renew our very interesting conversation. And now, if I could only get my boys together, I think I would go home. Have you seen any Aide who looked as though a Viceroy belonged to him?

MRS. H.—The feet of the young men are at the door without. You leave early.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—Have I not done enough?

MRS. H.—*(Half rising from her chair.)* Too much, alas! Too much! Look!

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(Regarding* MRS. SCRIFFSHAW, *who has risen, and is moving towards a side door.)* How interesting! By every law known to me she should have waited in that chair—such a comfortable chair—for my too tardy return. But now she is loose! How has this happened?

MRS. H.—*(Half to herself, shutting and opening fan.)* She is looking for May! I know it! Oh! Why wasn't she isolated? One of those women has taken revenge on Mrs. Scriffshaw's new glory—*you*—by telling her that May has been sitting out too much with Mr. Hawley.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—Blame me! Always blame a Viceroy! *(*MRS. H. *moves away.)* What are you meditating?

MRS. H.—Following—watching—administering—anything! I fly! I know where they are!

HIS EXCELLENCY.—The plot thickens! May I come to administer?

MRS. H.—*(Over her shoulder.)* If you can!

MRS. H. *flies down a darkened corridor speckled with occasional Chinese lanterns, and establishes herself behind a pillar as* MRS. S. *sweeps by to the darkest end, where* MAY *and* HAWLEY *are sitting very close together.* HIS EXCELLENCY *follows* MRS. H.

MRS. S.—*(To both the invisibles.)* Well!

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(To* MRS. H., *in a whisper.)* Now, I should be afraid. I should run away.

MRS. S.—*(In a high-pitched voice of the matron.)*

May, go to the cloak-room at once, and wait till I come. I wonder you expect anyone to speak to you after this! *(May hurries down corridor very considerably agitated.)*

His Excellency.—*(As May passes, slightly raising his voice, and with all the deference due to half a dozen Duchesses.)* May an old man be permitted to offer you his arm, my dear? *(To Mrs. H.)* I entreat—I *command* you to delay the catastrophe till I return!

Mrs. H.—*(Plunging into the darkness, and halting before a dead wall.)* Oh! I thought there was a way round! *(Pretends to discover the two.)* Mrs. Scriffshaw and Mr. Hawley! *(With exaggerated emphasis.)* Mrs. Scriffshaw—Oh! *Mrs.* Scriffshaw!—how truly shocking! What will that dear good husband of yours say? *(Smothered chuckle from Hawley, who otherwise preserves silence. Snorts of indignation from Mrs. S.)*

Mrs. H.—*(Hidden by pillar of observation.)* Now in any other woman that would have been possibly weak—certainly vulgar. But I think it has answered the purpose.

His Excellency.—*(Returning and taking up his post at her side.)* Poor little girl! She was shaking all over. What an enormous amount of facile emotion exists in the young! What is about to——

Mrs. S.—*(In a rattling whisper to Hawley.)* Take me to some quieter place.

Hawley.—On my word, you seem to be accustomed to *very* quiet places. I'm sorry I don't know any more secluded nook; but if you have anything to say——

MRS. S.—Say, indeed! I wish you to understand that I consider your conduct abominable, Sir!

HAWLEY.—*(In level, expressionless voice.)* Yes? Explain yourself.

MRS. S.—In the first place, you meet my niece at an entertainment of which I utterly disapprove——

HAWLEY.—To the extent of dancing with Major Decker, the most notorious loose fish in the whole room? Yes.

MRS. S.—*(Hotly.)* That was not my fault. It was entirely against my inclination.

HAWLEY.—It takes two to make a waltz. Presumably, you are capable of expressing your wishes—are you not?

MRS. S.—I did. It was—only—and I couldn't——

HAWLEY.—*(Relentlessly.)* Well, it's a most serious business. I've been talking it over with May.

MRS. S.—May!

HAWLEY.—Yes, May; and she has assured me that you do not do—er—this sort of thing often. She *assured* me of that.

MRS. S.—But by what right——

HAWLEY.—You see, May has promised to marry me, and one can't be too careful about one's connections.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(To MRS. H.)* That young man will go far! This is invention, indeed.

MRS. H.—He seems to have marched some paces already. (Blessed be the chance that led me to the Major! I can always say that I meant it.)

MRS. S.—May has promised . . . this is worse than ever! And *I* was not consulted!

HAWLEY.—If I had known the precise hour, you know, I might possibly have chosen to take you into my confidence.

MRS. S.—May should have told *me*.

HAWLEY.—You mustn't worry May about it. Is that perfectly clear to you?

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(To* MRS. H.*)* What a singularly flat, hopeless tone he has chosen to talk in—as if he were speaking to a coolie from a distance.

MRS. H.—Yes. It's the one note that will rasp through her over-strained nerves.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—You know him well?

MRS. H.—I trained him.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—Then *she* collapses.

MRS. H.—If she does not, all my little faith in man is gone for ever.

MRS. S.—*(To* HAWLEY.*)* This is perfectly monstrous! It's conduct utterly unworthy of a *man*, much less a gentleman. What do *I* know of you, or your connections, or your means?

HAWLEY.—Nothing. How could you?

MRS. S.—How could I? . . . Because—because I insist on knowing!

HAWLEY.—Then am I to understand that you are anxious to marry me? Suppose we talk to the Colonel about that?

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(To* MRS. H.*)* Very far indeed will that young man go.

MRS. S.—*(Almost weeping with anger.)* Will you

let me pass? I—I want to go away. I've no language at my command that could convey to you——

HAWLEY.—Then surely it would be better to wait here till the inspiration comes?

MRS. S.—But this is insolence!

HAWLEY.—You must remember that you drove May, who, by the way, is a woman, out of this place like a hen. That was insolence, Mrs. Scriffshaw—to her.

MRS. S.—To her? She's my husband's sister's child.

HAWLEY.—And she is going to do me the honour of carrying my name. I am accountable to your husband's sister in Calcutta. Sit down, please!

HIS EXCELLENCY.—She will positively assault him in a minute. I can hear her preparing for a spring.

MRS. H.—He will be able to deal with that too, if it happens. (I trained him. Bear witness, heaven and earth, I trained him, that his tongue should guard his head with my sex.)

MRS. S.—*(Feebly.)* What shall I do? What *can* I do? *(Through her teeth.)* I hate you!

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(Critically.)* Weak. The end approaches.

MRS. S.—*You're* not the sort of man I should have chosen for anybody's husband.

HAWLEY.—I can't say your choice seems particularly select—Major Decker, for instance. And, believe me, you are not required to choose husbands for anybody.

MRS. SCRIFFSHAW *looses all the double-thonged lightnings of her tongue, condemns* HAWLEY *as no*

gentleman, an impostor, possibly a bigamist, a defaulter, and every other unpleasant character she has ever read of. Announces her unalterable intention of refusing to recognize the engagement, and of harrying May tooth and talon, and renews her request to be allowed to pass. No answer.

His Excellency.—What a merciful escape! She might have attacked me on the chairs in this fashion. What will he do now?

Mrs. H.—I have faith—illimitable faith.

Mrs. S.—*(At the end of her resources.)* Well, what have you to say?

Hawley.—*(In a placid and most insinuating drawl.)* Aunt Alice—give—me—a—kiss.

His Excellency.—Beautiful! Oh! thrice beautiful! And my Secretaries never told me that there were men like this in the empire.

Mrs. S.—*(Bewilderedly, beginning to sob.)* Why—why *should* I?

Hawley.—Because you will make—you really will—a delightful aunt-in-law, and it will save such a lot of trouble when May and I are married, and you have to accept me as a relation.

Mrs. S.—*(Weeping gently.)* But—but you're taking the management of affairs into your own hands.

Hawley.—Quite so. They are my own affairs. And do you think that my aunt is competent to manage other people's affairs when she doesn't know whether she means to dance or sit out, and when she chooses the very worst——

MRS. S.—*(Appealingly.)* Oh, don't—don't! Please, don't! *(Bursts into tears.)*

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(To* MRS. H.*)* Unnecessarily brutal, surely? She's crying.

MRS. H.—No! It's nothing. We all cry—even the worst of us.

HAWLEY.—Well?

MRS. S.—*(Snuffling, with a rustle.)* There!

HAWLEY.—No, no, no! I said give it to me! *(It is given.)*

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(Carried away.)* And I? What am *I* doing here, pretending to govern India, while that man languishes in a lieutenant's uniform?

MRS. H.—*(Speaking very swiftly and distinctly.)* It rests with your Excellency to raise him to honour. He should go down the day after to-morrow. A month at Simla, now, would mean paradise to him, and one of your aides is dying for a little tiger-shooting.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—But would such an Archangel of Insolence condescend to run errands for me?

MRS. H.—You can but try.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—I shall be afraid of him; but we'll see if we can get the Commander-in-Chief to lend him to me.

HAWLEY.—*(To* MRS. S.*)* There, there, there! It's nothing to make a fuss about, is it? Come along, Aunt Alice, and I'll tuck you into your 'rickshaw, and you shall go home quite comfy, and the Colonel and I will bring May home later. I go down to my regiment the day after to-morrow, worse luck! so you won't have me long to trouble you. But we quite understand

each other, don't we? *(Emerges from the darkness, very tenderly escorting the very much shaken* MRS. SCRIFFSHAW.)

HIS EXCELLENCY.—*(To* MRS. H., *as the captive passes.)* I feel as though I ought to salute that young man; but I must go to the ball-room. Send him to me as soon as you can. *(Drifts in direction of music.* HAWLEY *returns to* MRS. H.*)*

HAWLEY.—*(Mopping his forehead.)* Phew! I have had easier duties.

MRS. H.—How could you? How dared you? I builded better than I knew. It was cruel, but it was superb.

HAWLEY.—Who taught me? Where's May?

MRS. H.—In the cloak-room—being put to rights, I fervently trust.

HAWLEY.—*(Guiltily.)* They wear their fringes so low on their foreheads that one can't——

MRS. H.—*(Laughing.)* Oh, you goose! That wasn't it. His Excellency wants to speak to you. *(*HAWLEY *turns to ball-room as* MRS. H. *flings herself down in a chair.)*

MRS. H.—*(Alone.)* For two seasons, at intervals, I formed that infant mind. Heavens, how raw he was in the beginning! And never once throughout his schooling did he disappoint you, dear. Never once, by word or look or sign, did he have the unspeakable audacity to fall in love with you. No. He chose his maiden, then he stopped his confidences, and conducted his own wooing, and in open fight slew his aunt-in-law. But he never, being a wholesome, dear, delightful boy,

fell in love with you, Mrs. Hauksbee; and I wonder whether you liked it or whether you didn't. Which? . . . You certainly never gave him a chance . . . but that was the very reason why . . . *(Half aloud.)* Mrs. Hauksbee, you are an idiot!

Enters main ball-room just in time to see His Excellency *conferring with* Hawley. *Aides in background.*

His Excellency.—Have you any very pressing employment in the Plains, Mr. Hawley?

Hawley.—Regimental duty. Native Cavalry, Sir.

His Excellency.—And, of course, you are anxious to return at once?

Hawley.—Not in the least, Sir.

His Excellency.—Do you think you could relieve one of my boys here for a month?

Hawley.—Most certainly, Sir.

Second Aide.—*(Behind* Viceroy's *shoulder, shouting in dumb show.)* My tiger! My tiger! My tigerling!

His Excellency.—*(Lowering his voice and regarding* Hawley *between the eyes.)* But could we trust you—ahem!—not to insist on ordering kisses at inopportune moments from—people?

Hawley.—*(Dropping his eyes.)* Not when I'm on duty, Sir.

His Excellency.—*(Turning.)* Then I'll speak to the Commander-in-Chief about it.

Mrs. H.—*(As she sees gratified expression of the* Viceroy's *and* Hawley's *lowered eyes.)* I am sometimes sorry that I am a woman, but I'm very glad that

I'm not a man, and—I shouldn't care to be an angel. *(*Mrs. Scriffshaw *and* May *pass—the latter properly laced. The former regarding the lacing.)* So, that's settled at last. *(To* Mrs. S.*)*. Your husband, Mrs. Scriffshaw? Yes, I know. But don't be too hard on him. Perhaps he never did it, after all.

Mrs. S.—*(With a grunt of infinite contempt.)* Mrs. Hauksbee, that man has tried to lace *me!*

Mrs. H.—(Then he is bolder than I thought. She will avenge all her outrages on the Colonel.) May, come and talk to me a moment, dear.

First Aide.—*(To* Hawley, *as the* Viceroy *drifts away.)* Knighted on the field of battle, by Jove! What the deuce have you been doing to His Excellency?

Second Aide.—I'll bet on it that Mrs. Hauksbee is at the bottom of this, somehow. I told her what I wanted, and——

Hawley.—Never look a gift tiger in the mouth. It's apt to bite. *(Departs in search of* May.*)*

His Excellency.—*(To* Mrs. H., *as he passes her sitting out with* May.*)* No, I am not so afraid of your young friend. Have I done well?

Mrs. H.—Exceedingly. *(In a whisper, indicating* May.*)* She *is* a pretty girl, isn't she?

His Excellency.—*(Regarding, mournfully, his chin on his breast.)* O youth, youth, youth! *Si la jeunesse savait—si la vieillesse pouvait.*

Mrs. H.—*(Incautiously.)* Yes, but in this case we have seen that youth did not know quite as much as was good for it, and—— *(Stops.)*

His Excellency.—And age had power, and used

it. Sufficient reward, perhaps, but I hardly expected the reminder from *you.*

MRS. H.—No. I won't try to excuse it. Perhaps the slip is as well, for it reminds me that I am but mortal, and in watching *you* controlling the destinies of the universe I thought I was as the gods!

HIS EXCELLENCY.—Thank you! I go to be taken away. But it has been an interesting evening.

SCRIFFSHAW.—*(Very much disturbed after the* VICEROY *has passed on, to* MRS. H.*)* Now, what in the world was wrong with my lacing? My wife didn't appear angry about my bringing May here. I'm informed she danced several dances herself. But she —she gave it me awfully in the supper-room for my—ahem!—lady's-maid work. Fearfully she gave it me! What was wrong? It held, didn't it?

MAY.—*(From her chair.)* It was beautiful, Uncle John. It was the best thing in the world you could have done. Never mind. *I* forgive you. *(To* HAWLEY, *behind her.)* No, Charlie. No more dances for just a little while. Ask Mrs. Hauksbee now.

Alarums and excursions. The ball-room is rent in twain as the VICEROY, AIDES, *etc., file out between lines of Volunteers and uniforms.*

BAND IN THE GALLERY:—

God save our gracious Queen,
Heaven bless our noble Queen,
  God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
  God save the Queen!

HAWLEY.—*(Behind* MRS. H.'s *chair.)* Amen, your Imperial Majesty!

MRS. H.—*(Looking up, head thrown back on left shoulder.)* Thank you! Yes, you can have the next if you want it. Mrs. Hauksbee isn't sitting out any more.

THE STORY OF THE GADSBYS.

PREFACE.

To the Address of
CAPTAIN J. MAFFLIN,
Duke of Derry's (Pink) Hussars.

DEAR MAFFLIN,—You will remember that I wrote this story as an Awful Warning. None the less you have seen fit to disregard it and have followed Gadsby's example—as I betted you would. I acknowledge that you paid the money at once, but you have prejudiced the mind of Mrs. Mafflin against myself, for though I am almost the only respectable friend of your bachelor days, she has been *darwaza band* to me throughout the season. Further, she caused you to invite me to dinner at the Club, where you called me "a wild ass of the desert," and went home at half-past ten, after discoursing for twenty minutes on the responsibilities of Housekeeping. You now drive a mail phaeton and sit under a Church of England clergyman. I am not angry, Jack. It is your *kismet*, as it was Gaddy's, and his *kismet* who can avoid? Do not think that I am moved by any spirit of revenge as I write, thus publicly, that you and you alone are responsible for this book. In other and more expansive days, when you could look at a magnum without flushing and at a cheroot without turning white, you supplied me with most of the material. Take it back again—would that I could have preserved your fetterless speech in the telling—take it back, and by your slippered hearth read

it to the late Miss Deercourt. She will not be any the more willing to receive my cards, but she will admire you immensely, and you, I feel sure, will love me. You may even invite me to another very bad dinner—at the Club, which, as you and your wife know, is a safe neutral ground for the entertainemnt of wild asses. Then, my very dear hypocrite, we shall be quits.

Yours always,

RUDYARD KIPLING.

P.S.—On second thoughts I should recommend you to keep the book away from Mrs. Mafflin.

POOR DEAR MAMMA.

The wild hawk to the wind-swept sky,
  The deer to the wholesome wold,
And the heart of a man to the heart of a maid,
  As it was in the days of old.

Gypsy Song.

SCENE.—*Interior of* MISS MINNIE THREEGAN'S *bedroom at Simla.* MISS THREEGAN, *in window-seat, turning over a drawerful of chiffons.* MISS EMMA DEERCOURT, *bosom-friend, who has come to spend the day, sitting on the bed, manipulating the bodice of a ball-room frock and a bunch of artificial lilies of the valley. Time* 5:30 P. M., *on a hot May afternoon.*

MISS DEERCOURT.—And *he* said:—"I shall *never* forget this dance," and, of course, I said:—"Oh! How *can* you be so silly!" Do you think he meant anything, dear?

MISS THREEGAN.—*(Extracting long lavender silk stocking from the rubbish.)* You know him better than *I* do.

MISS D.—Oh, *do* be sympathetic, Minnie! I'm *sure* he does. At least I *would* be sure if he wasn't always riding with that odious Mrs. Hagan.

MISS T.—I suppose so. How *does* one manage to dance through one's heels first? Look at this—isn't

it shameful? *(Spreads stocking-heel on open hand for inspection.)*

MISS D.—Never mind that! You can't mend it. Help me with this hateful bodice. I've run the string *so*, and I've run the string *so*, and I *can't* make the fullness come right. Where would you put this? *(Waves lilies of the valley.)*

MISS T.—As high up on the shoulder as possible.

MISS D.—Am I quite tall enough? I know it makes May Olger look lop-sided.

MISS T.—Yes, but May hasn't your shoulders. Hers are like a hock-bottle.

BEARER.—*(Rapping at door.)* Captain Sahib *aya*.

MISS D.—*(Jumping up wildly, and hunting for bodice, which she has discarded owing to the heat of the day.)* Captain Sahib! What Captain Sahib? Oh, good gracious, and I'm only half dressed! Well, I sha'n't bother.

MISS T.—*(Calmly.)* You needn't. It isn't for us. That's Captain Gadsby. He is going for a ride with Mamma. He generally comes five days out of the seven.

AGONIZED VOICE.—*(From an inner apartment.)* Minnie, run out and give Captain Gadsby some tea, and tell him I shall be ready in ten minutes; and, O Minnie, come to me an instant, there's a dear girl!

MISS T.—O bother! *(Aloud.)* Very well, Mamma.

Exit, and reappears, after five minutes, flushed, and rubbing her fingers.

MISS D.—You look pink. What has happened?

MISS T.—*(In a stage whisper.)* A twenty-four-inch

waist, and she won't let it out. Where *are* my bangles? *(Rummages on the toilet table, and dabs at her hair with a brush in the interval.)*

Miss D.—Who is this Captain Gadsby? I don't think I've met him.

Miss T.—You *must* have. He belongs to the Harrar set. I've danced with him, but I've never talked to him. He's a big yellow man, just like a newly-hatched chicken, with an e-normous mustache. He walks like this *(imitates Cavalry swagger)*, and he goes, "Ha—Hmmm!" deep down in his throat when he can't think of anything to say. Mamma likes him. I don't.

Miss D.—*(Abstractedly.)* Does he wax that mustache?

Miss T.—*(Busy with powder-puff.)* Yes, I think so. Why?

Miss D.—*(Bending over the bodice and sewing furiously.)* Oh, nothing—only . . .

Miss T.—*(Sternly.)* Only what? Out with it, Emma.

Miss D.—Well, May Olger—she's engaged to Mr. Charteris, you know—said . . . Promise you won't repeat this?

Miss T.—Yes, I promise. What did she say?

Miss D.—That—that being kissed *(with a rush)* by a man who *didn't* wax his mustache was—like eating an egg without salt.

Miss T.—*(At her full height, with crushing scorn.)* May Olger is a horrid, nasty *Thing*, and you can tell her I said so. I'm glad she doesn't belong to my set

. . . I must go and feed this *man!* Do I look presentable?

MISS D.—Yes, perfectly. Be quick and hand him over to your Mother, and then we can talk. *I* shall listen at the door to hear what you say to him.

MISS T.—'Sure I don't care. *I'm* not afraid of Captain Gadsby.

In proof of this swings into drawing-room with a mannish stride followed by two short steps, which produces the effect of a restive horse entering. Misses CAPTAIN GADSBY, *who is sitting in the shadow of the window-curtain, and gazes round helplessly.*

CAPTAIN GADSBY.—*(Aside.)* The filly, by Jove! Must ha' picked up that action from the sire. *(Aloud, rising.)* Good evening, Miss Threegan.

MISS T.—*(Conscious that she is flushing.)* Good evening, Captain Gadsby. Mamma told me to say that she will be ready in a few minutes. Won't you have some tea? *(Aside.)* I hope mamma will be quick. What *am* I to say to the creature? *(Aloud and abruptly.)* Milk and sugar.

CAPT. G.—No sugar, tha-anks, and very little milk. Ha-Hmmm.

MISS T.—*(Aside.)* If he's going to do that, I'm lost. I shall laugh. I *know* I shall!

CAPT. G.—*(Pulling at his mustache and watching it sideways down his nose.)* Ha-Hmmm. *(Aside.)* 'Wonder what the little beast can talk about. 'Must make a shot at it.

MISS T.—*(Aside.)* Oh, this is agonizing. I *must* say something.

BOTH TOGETHER.—Have you been . . .

CAPT. G.—I beg your pardon. You were going to say——

MISS T.—*(Who has been watching the mustache with awed fascination.)* Won't you have some eggs?

CAPT. G.—*(Looking bewilderingly at the tea-table.)* Eggs! *(Aside.)* Oh, Hades! She must have a nursery-tea at this hour. S'pose they've wiped her mouth and sent her to me while the Mother is getting on her duds. *(Aloud.)* No, thanks.

MISS T.—*(Crimson with confusion.)* Oh! I didn't mean that. I wasn't thinking of mu—eggs for an instant. I mean *salt*. Won't you have some sa—sweets? *(Aside.)* He'll think me a raving lunatic. I wish Mamma would come.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* It *was* a nursery-tea and she's ashamed of it. By Jove! She doesn't look half bad when she colors up like that. *(Aloud, helping himself from the dish.)* Have you seen those new chocolates at Peliti's?

MISS T.—No, I made these myself. What are they like?

CAPT. G.—These! *De*-licious. *(Aside.)* And that's a fact.

MISS T.—*(Aside.)* Oh, bother!—He'll think I'm fishing for compliments. *(Aloud.)* No, Peliti's of course.

CAPT. G.—*(Enthusiastically.)* Not to compare with these. How d'you make them? I can't get my *khansamah* to understand the simplest thing beyond mutton and *murghi*.

MISS T.—Yes? I'm not a *khansamah*, you know. Perhaps you frighten him. You should never frighten a servant. He loses his head. It's very bad policy.

CAPT. G.—He's so awf'ly stupid.

MISS T.—*(Folding her hands in her lap.)* You should call him quietly and say:—"O *khansamah jee!"*

CAPT. G.—*(Getting interested.)* Yes? *(Aside.)* Fancy that little featherweight saying, "O *khansamah jee"* to my bloodthirsty Mir Khan!

MISS T.—Then you should explain the dinner, dish by dish.

CAPT. G.—But I can't speak the vernacular.

MISS T.—*(Patronizingly.)* You should pass the Higher Standard and try.

CAPT. G.—I have, but I don't seem to be any the wiser. Are you?

MISS T.—I never passed the Higher Standard. But the *khansamah* is very patient with me. He doesn't get angry when I talk about sheep's *topees*, or order *maunds* of grain when I mean *seers*.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside, with intense indignation.)* I'd like to see Mir Khan being rude to that girl! Hullo! Steady the Buffs! *(Aloud.)* And do you understand about horses, too?

MISS T.—A little—not very much. I can't doctor them, but I know what they ought to eat, and I am in charge of our stable.

CAPT. G.—Indeed! You might help me then. What ought a man to give his *sais* in the Hills? My ruffian says eight rupees, because everything is so dear.

MISS T.—Six rupees a month, and one rupee Simla allowance—neither more nor less. And a grass-cut gets six rupees. That's better than buying grass in the bazar.

CAPT. G.—*(Admiringly.)*. How do you know?

MISS T.—I have tried both ways.

CAPT. G.—Do you ride much, then? I've never seen you on the Mall?

MISS T.—*(Aside.)* I haven't passed him *more* than fifty times. *(Aloud.)* Nearly every day.

CAPT. G.—By Jove! I didn't know that. Ha-Hmmm! *(Pulls at his mustaches and is silent for forty seconds.)*

MISS T.—*(Desperately, and wondering what will happen next.)* It looks beautiful. I shouldn't touch it if I were you. *(Aside.)* It's all Mamma's fault for not coming before. I *will* be rude!

CAPT. G.—*(Bronzing under the tan, and bringing down his hand very quickly.)* Eh! Wha-at! Oh, yes! Ha! Ha! *(Laughs uneasily.)* *(Aside.)* Well, of *all* the dashed cheek! I never had a woman say that to me yet. She must be a cool hand or else . . . Ah! that nursery-tea!

VOICE FROM THE UNKNOWN.—Tchk! Tchk! Tchk!

CAPT. G.—Good gracious! What's that?

MISS T.—The dog, I think. *(Aside.)* Emma *has* been listening, and I'll never forgive her!

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)*. They don't keep dogs here. *(Aloud.)* Didn't sound like a dog, did it?

MISS T.—Then it must have been the cat. Let's go into the veranda. What a lovely evening.

Steps into veranda and looks out across the hills into sunset. The Captain follows.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Superb eyes! I wonder that I never noticed them before! *(Aloud.)* There's going to be a dance at Viceregal Lodge on Wednesday. Can you spare me one?

MISS T.—*(Shortly.)* No! I don't want any of your charity-dances. You only ask me because Mamma told you to. I hop and I bump. You *know* I do.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* That's true, but little girls shouldn't understand these things. *(Aloud.)* No, on my word, I don't. You dance beautifully.

MISS T.—Then why do you always stand out after half a dozen turns? I thought officers in the Army didn't tell fibs.

CAPT. G.—It wasn't a fib, believe me. I really *do* want the pleasure of a dance with you.

MISS T.—*(Wickedly.)* Why? Won't Mamma dance with you any more?

CAPT. G.—*(More earnestly than the necessity demands.)* I wasn't thinking of your Mother. *(Aside.)* You little vixen!

MISS T.—*(Still looking out of the window.)* Eh? Oh, I beg your pardon. I was thinking of something else.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Well! I wonder what she'll say next. I've never known a woman treat *me* like this before. I might be—Dash it, I might be an Infantry subaltern. *(Aloud.)* Oh, *please* don't trouble. I'm

not worth thinking about. Isn't your Mother ready yet?

MISS T.—I should think so; but promise me, Captain Gadsby, you won't take poor dear Mamma twice round Jakko any more. It tires her so.

CAPT. G.—She says that no exercise tires her.

MISS T.—Yes, but she suffers afterwards. *You* don't know what rheumatism is, and you oughtn't to keep her out so late, when it gets chilly in the evenings.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Rheumatism! I *thought* she came off her horse rather in a bunch. Whew! One lives and learns. *(Aloud.)* I'm sorry to hear that. She hasn't mentioned it to me.

MISS T.—*(Flurried.)* Of course not! Poor dear Mamma never would. And you mustn't say that I told you either. Promise me that you won't. Oh, Captain Gadsby, *promise* me you won't!

CAPT. G.—I am dumb, or—I shall be as soon as you've given me that dance, and another . . . if you can trouble yourself to think about me for a minute.

MISS T.—But you won't like it one little bit. You'll be awfully sorry afterwards.

CAPT. G.—I shall like it above all things, and I shall only be sorry that I didn't get more. *(Aside.)* Now what in the world am I saying?

MISS T.—Very well. You will have only yourself to thank if your toes are trodden on. Shall we say Seven?

CAPT. G.—And Eleven. *(Aside.)* She can't be more than eight stone, but, even then, it's an absurdly small foot. *(Looks at his own riding boots.)*

MISS T.—They're beautifully shiny. I can almost see my face in them.

CAPT. G.—I was thinking whether I should have to go on crutches for the rest of my life if you trod on my toes.

MISS T.—Very likely. Why not change Eleven for a square?

CAPT. G.—No, *please!* I want them both waltzes. Won't you write them down?

MISS T.— *I* don't get so many dances that I shall confuse them. *You* will be the offender.

CAPT. G.—Wait and see! *(Aside.)* She doesn't dance perfectly, perhaps, but . . .

MISS T.—Your tea must have got cold by this time. Won't you have another cup?

CAPT G.—No, thanks. Don't you think it's pleasanter out in the veranda? *(Aside.)* I never saw hair take that color in the sunshine before. *(Aloud.)* It's like one of Dicksee's pictures.

MISS T.—Yes! It's a wonderful sunset, isn't it? *(Bluntly.)* But what do *you* know about Dicksee's pictures?

CAPT. G.—I go Home occasionally. And I used to know the Galleries. *(Nervously.)* You mustn't think me only a Philistine with . . . a mustache.

MISS T.—Don't! *Please* don't! I'm *so* sorry for what I said then. I was *horribly* rude. It slipped out before I thought. Don't you know the temptation to say frightful and shocking things just for the mere sake of saying them? I'm afraid I gave way to it.

CAPT. G.—*(Watching the girl as she flushes.)* I

think I know the feeling. It would be terrible if we all yielded to it, wouldn't it? For instance, I might say . . .

POOR DEAR MAMMA.—*(Entering, habited, hatted, and booted.)* Ah, Captain Gadsby! 'Sorry to keep you waiting. 'Hope you haven't been bored. 'My little girl been talking to you?

MISS T.—*(Aside.)* I'm not sorry I spoke about the rheumatism. I'm not! I'm NOT! I only wish I'd mentioned the corns too.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* What a shame! I wonder how old she is. It never occurred to me before. *(Aloud.)* We've been discussing "Shakespeare and the musical glasses" in the veranda.

MISS T.—*(Aside.)* Nice man! He knows that quotation. He *isn't* a Philistine with a mustache. *(Aloud.)* Good-by, Captain Gadsby. *(Aside.)* What a huge hand and *what* a squeeze! I don't suppose he meant it, but he has driven the rings into my fingers.

POOR DEAR MAMMA.—Has Vermilion come round yet? Oh, yes! Captain Gadsby, don't you think that the saddle is too far forward? *(They pass into the front veranda.)*

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* How the dickens should I know what she prefers? She told me that she doted on horses. *(Aloud.)* I think it is.

MISS T.—*(Coming out into front veranda.)* Oh! Bad Buldoo! I must speak to him for this. He has taken up the curb two links, and Vermilion hates that. *(Passes out and to horse's head.)*

CAPT. G.—Let me do it!

MISS T.—No, Vermilion understands me. Don't you, old man? *(Looses curb-chain skillfully, and pats horse on nose and throttle.)* Poor Vermilion! *Did* they want to cut his chin off? There!

CAPTAIN GADSBY *watches the interlude with undisguised admiration.*

POOR DEAR MAMMA.—*(Tartly to* MISS T.*)* You've forgotten your guest, I think, dear.

MISS T.—Good gracious! So I have! Good-by. *(Retreats indoors hastily.)*

POOR DEAR MAMMA.—*(Bunching reins in fingers hampered by too tight gauntlets.)* Captain Gadsby!

CAPTAIN GADSBY *stoops and makes the foot-rest.* POOR DEAR MAMMA *blunders, halts too long, and breaks through it.*

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Can't hold up eleven stone forever. It's all your rheumatism. *(Aloud.)* Can't imagine why I was so clumsy. *(Aside.)* Now Little Featherweight would have gone up like a bird.

They ride out of the garden. The CAPTAIN *falls back*

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* How that habit catches her under the arms! Ugh!

POOR DEAR MAMMA.—*(With the worn smile of sixteen seasons, the worse for exchange.)* You're dull this afternoon, Captain Gadsby.

CAPT. G.—*(Spurring up wearily.)* Why did you keep me waiting so long?

Et cactera, et cactera, et cactera.

(AN INTERVAL OF THREE WEEKS.)

GILDED YOUTH.— *Sitting on railing opposite Town Hall.)* Hullo, Gaddy! 'Been trotting out the Gorgonzola? We all thought it was the Gorgon you're mashing.

CAPT. G.—*(With withering emphasis.)* You young cub! What the ——— does it matter to you?

Proceeds to read GILDED YOUTH *a lecture on discretion and deportment, which crumples latter like a Chinese Lantern. Departs fuming.*

(FURTHER INTERVAL OF FIVE WEEKS.)

SCENE.—*Exterior of New Library on a foggy evening.* MISS THREEGAN *and* MISS DEERCOURT *meet among the 'rickshaws.* MISS T. *is carrying a bundle of books under her left arm.*

MISS D.—*(Level intonation.)* Well?

MISS T.—*(Ascending intonation.)* Well?

MISS D.—*(Capturing her friend's left arm, taking away all the books, placing books in 'rickshaw, returning to arm, securing hand by the third finger and investigating.)* Well! You *bad* girl! And you *never* told me.

MISS T.—*(Demurely.)* He—he—he only spoke yesterday afternoon.

MISS D.—Bless you, dear! And I'm to be bridesmaid, aren't I? You *know* you promised *ever* so long ago.

MISS T.—Of course. I'll tell you all about it to-morrow. *(Gets into 'rickshaw.)* Oh, Emma!

MISS D.—*(With intense interest.)* Yes, dear?

MISS T.—*(Piano.)* It's quite true . . . about . . . the . . . egg.

MISS D.—What egg?

MISS T.—*(Pianissimo prestissimo.)* The egg with-with the salt. *(Forte.)* *Chalo ghar ko jaldi, jhampani!*

CURTAIN.

THE WORLD WITHOUT.

"Certain people of importance."

SCENE.—*Smoking-room of the Degchi Club. Time* 10.30 P.M. *of a stuffy night in the Rains. Four men dispersed in picturesque attitudes and easy-chairs. To these enter Blayne of the Irregular Moguls, in evening dress.*

BLAYNE.—Phew! The Judge ought to be hanged in his own store-godown. Hi, *khitmatgar! Poora* whiskey-peg, to take the taste out of my mouth.

CURTISS.—*(Royal Artillery.)* That's it, is it? What the deuce made you dine at the Judge's? You know his *bandobust.*

BLAYNE.—Thought it couldn't be worse than the Club; but I'll swear he buys ullaged liquor and doctors it with gin and ink. *(Looking round the room.)* Is this all of you to-night?

DOONE.—*(P. W. D.)* Anthony was called out at dinner. Mingle had a pain in his tummy.

CURTISS.—Miggy dies of cholera once a week in the Rains, and gets drunk on chlorodyne in between. 'Good little chap, though. Anyone at the Judge's, Blayne?

BLAYNE.—Cockley and his *memsahib* looking awfully white and fagged. 'Female girl—couldn't catch the name—on her way to the Hills, under the Cockleys' charge—the Judge, and Markyn fresh from Simla—disgustingly fit.

CURTISS.—Good Lord, how truly magnificent! Was there enough ice? When I mangled garbage there I got one whole lump—nearly as big as a walnut. What had Markyn to say for himself?

BLAYNE.—'Seems that every one is having a fairly good time up there in spite of the rain. By Jove, that reminds me! I know I hadn't come across just for the pleasure of your society. News! Great news! Markyn told me.

DOONE.—Who's dead now?

BLAYNE.—No one that I know of; but Gaddy's hooked at last!

DROPPING CHORUS.—How much? The Devil! Markyn was pulling your leg. Not GADDY!

BLAYNE.—"Yea, verily, verily, verily! Verily, verily, I say unto thee." Theodore, the gift o' God! Our Phillup! It's been given out up above.

MACKESY.—*(Barrister-at-Law.)* Huh! Women will give out anything. What does accused say?

BLAYNE.—Markyn told me that he congratulated him warily—one hand held out, t'other ready to guard. Gaddy turned pink and said it was so.

CURTISS.—Poor old Gaddy! They all do it. Who's *she?* Let's hear the details.

BLAYNE.—She's a girl—daughter of a Colonel Somebody.

DOONE.—Simla's stiff with Colonels' daughters. Be more explicit.

BLAYNE.—Wait a shake. What *was* her name? Three—something. Three—

CURTISS.—Stars, perhaps. Gaddy knows *that* brand.

BLAYNE.—Threegan—Minnie Threegan.

MACKESY.—Threegan! Isn't she a little bit of a girl with red hair?

BLAYNE.—'Bout that—from what Markyn said.

MACKESY.—Then I've met her. She was at Lucknow last season. 'Owned a permanently juvenile Mamma, and danced dammably. I say, Jervoise, you knew the Threegans, didn't you?

JERVOISE.—*(Civilian of twenty-five years' service, waking up from his doze.)* Eh! What's that? Knew who? How? I thought I was at Home, confound you!

MACKESY.—The Threegan girl's engaged, so Blayne says.

JERVOISE.—*(Slowly.)* Engaged—engaged! Bless my soul! I'm getting an old man! Little Minnie Threegan engaged! It was only the other day I went home with them in the *Surat*—not the *Massillia*—and she was crawling about on her hands and knees among the *ayahs*. 'Used to call me the "*Tick Tack Sahib*" because I showed her my watch. And that was in Sixty-Seven—no, Seventy. Good God, how time flies! I'm an old man. I remember when Threegan married Miss Derwent—daughter of old Hooky Derwent—but that was before your time. And so the little baby's engaged to have a little baby of her own! Who's the other fool?

MACKESY.—Gadsby of the Pink Hussars.

JERVOISE.—'Never met him. Threegan lived in

debt, married in debt, and'll die in debt. 'Must be glad to get the girl off his hands.

BLAYNE.—Gaddy has money—lucky devil. Place at Home, too.

DOONE.—He comes of first-class stock. 'Can't quite understand his being caught by a Colonel's daughter, and *(looking cautiously round room)* Black Infantry at that! No offense to you, Blayne.

BLAYNE.—*(Stiffly.)* Not much, tha-anks.

CURTISS.—*(Quoting motto of Irregular Moguls.)* "We are what we are," eh, old man? But Gaddy was such a superior animal as a rule. Why didn't he go Home and pick his wife there?

MACKESY.—They are all alike when they come to the turn into the straight. About thirty a man begins to get sick of living alone—

CURTISS.—And of the eternal muttony-chop in the morning.

DOONE.—It's dead goat as a rule, but go on, Mackesy.

MACKESY.—If a man's once taken that way nothing will hold him. Do you remember Benoit of your service, Doone? They transferred him to Tharanda when his time came, and he married a plate-layer's daughter, or something of that kind. She was the only female about the place.

DOONE.—Yes, poor brute. That smashed Benoit's chances altogether. Mrs. Benoit used to ask:—"Was you goin' to the dance this evenin'?"

CURTISS.—Hang it all! Gaddy hasn't married be-

neath him. There's no tar-brush in the family, I suppose.

JERVOISE.—Tar-brush! Not an anna. You young fellows talk as though the man was doing the girl an honor in marrying her. You're all too conceited—nothing's good enough for you.

BLAYNE.—Not even an empty Club, a dam' bad dinner at the Judge's, and a Station as sickly as a hospital. You're quite right. We're a set of Sybarites.

DOONE.—Luxurious dogs, wallowing in——

CURTISS.—Prickly heat between the shoulders. I'm covered with it. Let's hope Beora will be cooler.

BLAYNE.—Whew! Are *you* ordered into camp, too? I thought the Gunners had a clean sheet.

CURTISS.—No, worse luck. Two cases yesterday—one died—and if we have a third, out we go. Is there any shooting at Beora, Doone?

DOONE.—The country's under water, except the patch by the Grand Trunk Road. I was there yesterday, looking at a *bund*, and came across four poor devils in their last stage. It's rather bad from here to Kuchara.

CURTISS.—Then we're pretty certain to have a heavy go of it. Heigho! I shouldn't mind changing places with Gadly for a while. 'Sport with Amaryllis in the shade of the Town Hall, and all that. Oh, why doesn't somebody come and marry me, instead of letting me go into cholera camp?

MACKESY (*pointing to notice forbidding dogs in the Club.*)—Ask the Committee.

CURTISS.—You irreclaimable ruffian! You'll stand

me another peg for that. Blayne, what will you take? Mackesy is fined on moral grounds. Doone, have you any preference?

DOONE.—Small glass Kümmel, please. Excellent carminative, these days. Anthony told me so.

MACKESY *(signing voucher for four drinks)*.—Most unfair punishment. I only thought of Curtiss as Actæon being chivied round the billiard tables by the nymphs of Diana.

BLAYNE.—Curtiss would have to import his nymphs by train. Mrs. Cockley's the only woman in the Station. She won't leave Cockley, and he's doing his best to get her to go.

CURTISS.—Good, indeed! Here's Mrs. Cockley's health. To the only wife in the Station and a damned brave woman!

OMNES *(drinking)*.—A damned brave woman!

BLAYNE.—I suppose Gaddy will bring his wife here at the end of the cold weather. They are going to be married almost immediately, I believe.

CURTISS.—Gaddy may thank his luck that the Pink Hussars are all detachment and no headquarters this hot weather, or he'd be torn from the arms of his love as sure as death. Have you ever noticed the thorough-minded way British Cavalry take to cholera? It's because they are so expensive. If the Pinks had stood fast here, they would have been out in camp a month ago. Yes, I should decidedly like to be Gaddy.

MACKESY.—He'll go Home after he's married, and send in his papers—see if he doesn't.

BLAYNE.—Why shouldn't he? Hasn't he money?

Would any one of us be here if we weren't paupers?

DOONE.—Poor old pauper! What has become of the six hundred you rooked from our table last month?

BLAYNE.—It took unto itself wings. I think an enterprising tradesman got some of it, and a *shroff* gobbled the rest—or else I spent it.

CURTISS.—Gaddy never had dealings with a *shroff* in his life.

DOONE.—Virtuous Gaddy! If *I* had three thousand a month, paid from England, I don't think I'd deal with a *shroff* either.

MACKESY *(yawning)*.—Oh, it's a sweet life! I wonder whether matrimony would make it sweeter.

CURTISS.—Ask Cockley—with his wife dying by inches!

BLAYNE.—Go home and get a fool of a girl to come out to—what is it Thackeray says?—"the splendid palace of an Indian pro-consul."

DOONE.—Which reminds me. My quarters leak like a sieve. I had fever last night from sleeping in a swamp. And the worst of it is, one can't do anything to a roof till the Rains are over.

CURTISS.—What's wrong with you? *You* haven't eighty rotting Tommies to take into a running stream

DOONE.—No: but I'm a compost of boils and bad language. I'm a regular Job all over my body. It's sheer poverty of blood, and I don't see any chance of getting richer—either way.

BLAYNE.—Can't you take leave?

DOONE.—That's the pull you Army men have over us. Ten days are nothing in your sight. *I'm* so im-

portant that Government can't find a substitute if I go away. Ye-es, I'd like to be Gaddy, whoever his wife may be.

CURTISS.—You've passed the turn of life that Mackesy was speaking of.

DOONE.—Indeed I have, but I never yet had the brutality to ask a woman to share my life out here.

BLAYNE.—On my soul I believe you're right. I'm thinking of Mrs. Cockley. The woman's an absolute wreck.

DOONE.—Exactly. Because she stays down here. The only way to keep her fit would be to send her to the Hills for eight months—and the same with any woman. I fancy I see myself taking a wife on those terms.

MACKESY.—With the rupee at one and sixpence. The little Doones would be little Dehra Doones, with a fine Mussoorie *chi chi* to bring home for the holidays.

CURTISS.—And a pair of be-ewtiful *sambhur*-horns for Doone to wear, free of expense, presented by——

DOONE.—Yes, it's an enchanting prospect. By the way, the rupee hasn't done falling yet. The time will come when we shall think ourselves lucky if we only lose half our pay.

CURTISS.—Surely a third's loss enough. Who gains by the arrangement? That's what I want to know.

BLAYNE.—The Silver Question! I'm going to bed if you begin squabbling. Thank Goodness, here's Anthony—looking like a ghost.

Enter Anthony, Indian Medical Staff, very white and tired.

ANTHONY.—'Evening, Blayne. It's raining in sheets. *Peg lao, khitmatgar.* The roads are something ghastly.

CURTISS.—How's Mingle?

ANTHONY.—Very bad, and more frightened. I handed him over to Fewton. Mingle might just as well have called him in the first place, instead of bothering me.

BLAYNE.—He's a nervous little chap. What has he got, this time?

ANTHONY.—'Can't quite say. A very bad tummy and a blue funk so far. He asked me at once if it was cholera, and I told him not to be a fool. That soothed him.

CURTISS.—Poor devil! The funk does half the business in a man of that build.

ANTHONY *(lighting a cheroot.)*—I firmly believe the funk will kill him if he stays down. You know the amount of trouble he's been giving Fewton for the last three weeks. He's doing his very best to frighten himself into the grave.

GENERAL CHORUS.—Poor little devil! Why doesn't he get away?

ANTHONY.—'Can't. He has his leave all right, but he's so dipped he can't take it, and I don't think his name on paper would raise four annas. That's in confidence, though.

MACKESY.—All the Station knows it.

ANTHONY.—"I suppose I shall have to die here," he said, squirming all across the bed. He's quite made up his mind to Kingdom Come. And I *know* he has

nothing more than a wet-weather tummy if he could only keep a hand on himself.

BLAYNE.—That's bad. That's *very* bad. Poor little Miggy. Good little chap, too. I say——

ANTHONY.—What do you say?

BLAYNE.—Well, look here—anyhow. If it's like that—as you say—I say fifty.

CURTISS.—I say fifty.

MACKESY.—I go twenty better.

DOONE.—Bloated Crœsus of the Bar! I say fifty. Jervoise, what do you say? Hi! Wake up!

JERVOISE.—Eh! What that? What's that?

CURTISS.—We want a hundred dibs from you. You're a bachelor drawing a gigantic income, and there's a man in a hole.

JERVOIS.—What man? Any one dead?

BLAYNE.—No, but he'll die if you don't give the hundred. Here! Here's a peg-voucher. You can see what we've signed for, and a *chaprassi* will come round to-morrow to collect it. So there will be no trouble.

JERVOISE *(signing)*.—One hundred, E. M. J. There you are *(feebly)*. It isn't one of your jokes, is it?

BLAYNE.—No, it really *is* wanted. Anthony, you were the biggest poker-winner last week, and you've defrauded the tax-collector too long. Sign!

ANTHONY.—Let's see. Three fifties and a seventy—two twenty—three twenty—say four twenty. That'll give him a month clear at the Hills. Many thanks, you men. I'll send round the *chaprassi* to-morrow.

CURTISS.—You must engineer his taking the stuff, and of course you mustn't——

ANTHONY.—*Of* course. It would never do. He'd weep with gratitude over his evening drink.

BLAYNE.—That's just what he would do, damn him. Oh! I say, Anthony, you pretend to know everything. Have you heard about Gaddy?

ANTHONY.—No. Divorce Court at last?

BLAYNE.—Worse. He's engaged.

ANTHONY.—How much? He *can't* be!

BLAYNE.—He *is*. He's going to be married in a few weeks. Markyn told me at the Judge's this evening. It's *pukka*.

ANTHONY.—You don't say so? Holy Moses! There'll be a shine in the tents of Kedar.

CURTISS.—'Regiment cut up rough, think you?

ANTHONY.—'Don't know anything about the Regiment.

MACKESY.—It is bigamy, then?

ANTHONY.—Maybe. Do you mean to say that you men have forgotten, or is there more charity in the world than I thought?

DOONE.—You don't look pretty when you are trying to keep a secret. You bloat. Explain.

ANTHONY.—Mrs. Herriott!

BLAYNE.—*(After a long pause, to the room generally.)* It's my notion that we are a set of fools.

MACKESY.—Nonsense. *That* business was knocked on the head last season. Why, young Mallard——

ANTHONY.—Mallard was a candle-stick, paraded as such. Think a while. Recollect last season and the

talk then. Mallard or no Mallard, did Gaddy ever talk to any other woman?

CURTISS.—There's something in that. It *was* slightly noticeable now you come to mention it. But she's at Naini Tal and he's at Simla.

ANTHONY.—He had to go to Simla to look after a globe-trotter relative of his—a person with a title. Uncle or aunt.

BLAYNE.—And there he got engaged. No law prevents a man growing tired of a woman.

ANTHONY.—Except that he mustn't do it till the woman is tired of him. And the Herriott woman was not that.

CURTISS.—She may be now. Two months of Naini Tal work wonders.

DOONE.—Curious thing how some women carry a Fate with them. There was a Mrs. Deegie in the Central Provinces whose men invariably fell away and got married. It became a regular proverb with us when I was down there. I remember three men desperately devoted to her, and they all, one after another, took wives.

CURTISS.—That's odd. Now I should have thought that Mrs. Deegie's influence would have led them to take other men's wives. It ought to have made them afraid of the judgment of Providence.

ANTHONY.—Mrs. Herriott will make Gaddy afraid of something more than the judgment of Providence, I fancy.

BLAYNE.—Supposing things are as you say, he'll be a fool to face her. He'll sit tight at Simla.

ANTHONY.—'Shouldn't be a bit surprised if he went off to Naini to explain. He's an unaccountable sort of man, and she's likely to be a more than unaccountable woman.

DOONE.—What makes you take her character away so confidently?

ANTHONY.—*Primum tempus.* Gaddy was her first, and a woman doesn't allow her first man to drop away without expostulation. She justifies the first transfer of affection to herself by swearing that it is forever and ever. Consequently . . .

BLAYNE.—Consequently, we are sitting here till past one o'clock, talking scandal like a set of Station cats. Anthony, it's all your fault. We were perfectly respectable till you came in. Go to bed. I'm off. Good night all.

CURTISS.—Past one! It's past two, by Jove, and here's the *khit* coming for the late charge. Just Heavens! One, two, three, four, *five* rupees to pay for the pleasure of saying that a poor little beast of a woman is no better than she should be. I'm ashamed of myself. Go to bed, you slanderous villains, and if I'm sent to Beora to-morrow, be prepared to hear I'm dead before paying my card-account!

CURTAIN.

THE TENTS OF KEDAR.

Only why should it be with pain at all
Why must I 'twixt the leaves of coronal
  Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow?
Why should the other women know so much,
And talk together:—Such the look and such
  The smile he used to love with, then as now.
Any Wife to any Husband.

SCENE.—*A Naini Tal dinner for thirty-four. Plate, wines, crockery and khitmatgars carefully calculated to scale of Rs. 6,000 per mensem, less Exchange. Table split lengthways by bank of flowers.*

MRS. HERRIOTT.—*(After conversation has risen to proper pitch.)* Ah! 'Didn't see you in the crush in the drawing-room. *(Sotto voce.)* Where *have* you been all this while, Pip?

CAPTAIN GADSBY.—*(Turning from regularly ordained dinner partner and settling hock glasses.)* Good evening. *(Sotto voce.)* Not quite so loud another time. You've no notion how your voice carries. *(Aside.)* So much for shirking the written explanation. It'll have to be a verbal one now. Sweet prospect! How on earth am I to tell her that I am a respectable, engaged member of society and it's all over between us?

MRS. H.—I've a heavy score against you. Where were you at the Monday Pop? Where were you on Tuesday? Where were you at the Lamonts' tennis? I was looking everywhere.

CAPT. G.—For me! Oh, I was alive somewhere, I suppose. *(Aside.)* It's for Minnie's sake, but it's going to be dashed unpleasant.

MRS. H.—Have I done anything to offend you? I never meant it if I have. I couldn't help going for a ride with the Vaynor man. It was promised a week before you came up.

CAPT. G.—I didn't know——

MRS. H.—It really *was*.

CAPT. G.—Anything about it, I mean.

MRS. H.—What has upset you to-day? All these days? You haven't been near me for four whole days—nearly one hundred hours. Was it *kind* of you, Pip? And I've been looking forward so much to your coming.

CAPT. G.—Have you?

MRS. H.—You *know* I have! I've been as foolish as a schoolgirl about it. I made a little calendar and put it in my card-case, and every time the twelve o'clock gun went off I scratched out a square and said:—"That brings me nearer to Pip. My Pip!"

CAPT. G.—*(With an uneasy laugh.)* What will Mackler think if you neglect him so?

MRS. H.—And it hasn't brought you nearer. You seem farther away than ever. Are you sulking about something? I know your temper.

CAPT. G.—No.

MRS. H.—Have I grown old in the last few months, then? *(Reaches forward to bank of flowers for menu card.)*

PARTNER ON LEFT.—Allow me. *(Hands menu-*

card. MRS. H. *keeps her arm at full stretch for three seconds.)*

MRS. H.—*(To partner.)* Oh, thanks. I didn't see. *(Turns right again.)* Is anything in me changed at all?

CAPT. G.—For Goodness' sake go on with your dinner! You must eat something. Try one of those cutlet arrangements. *(Aside.)* And I fancied she had good shoulders, once upon a time! What an ass a man can make of himself!

MRS. H.—*(Helping herself to a paper frill, seven peas, some stamped carrots and a spoonful of gravy.)* That isn't an answer. Tell me whether I have done anything.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* If it isn't ended here there will be a ghastly scene somewhere else. If only I'd written to her and stood the racket—at long range! *(To khitmatgar.) Han! Simpkin do. (Aloud.)* I'll tell you later on.

MRS. H.—Tell me *now.* It must be some foolish misunderstanding, and you know that there was to be nothing of that sort between us! *We,* of all people in the world, can't afford it. Is it the Vaynor man, and don't you like to say so? On my honor——

CAPT. G.—I haven't given the Vaynor man a thought.

MRS. H.—But how d'you know that *I* haven't?

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Here's my chance and may the Devil help me through with it. *(Aloud and measuredly.)* Believe me, I do not care how often or how tenderly you think of the Vaynor man.

MRS. H.—I wonder if you mean that.—Oh, what *is* the good of squabbling and pretending to misunderstand when you are only up for so short a time? Pip, don't be a stupid!

Follows a pause, during which he crosses his left leg over his right and continues his dinner.

CAPT. G.—*(In answer to the thunderstorm in her eyes.)* Corns—my worst.

MRS. H.—Upon my word, you are the very rudest man in the world! I'll *never* do it again.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* No, I don't think you will; but I wonder what you will do before it's all over. *(To khitmatgar.)* *Thorah our Simpkin do.*

MRS. H.—Well! Haven't you the grace to apologize, bad man?

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* I mustn't let it drift back *now*. Trust a woman for being as blind as a bat when she won't see.

MRS. H.—I'm waiting: or would you like me to dictate a form of apology?

CAPT. G.—*(Desperately.)* By all means dictate.

MRS. H.—*(Lightly.)* Very well. Rehearse your several Christian names after me and go on:—"Profess my sincere repentance."

CAPT. G.—"Sincere repentance."

MRS. H.—"For having behaved——"

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* At last! I wish to Goodness she'd look away. *(Aloud.)* "For having behaved" as I have behaved, and declare that I am thoroughly and heartily sick of the whole business, and take this opportunity of making clear my intention of ending it,

now, henceforward, and forever. *(Aside.)* If any one had told me I should be such a blackguard . . . !

MRS. H.—*(Shaking a spoonful of potato-chips into her plate.)* That's not a pretty joke.

CAPT. G.—No. It's a reality. *(Aside.)* I wonder if smashes of this kind are always so raw.

MRS. H.—Really, Pip, you're getting more absurd every day.

CAPT. G.—I don't think you quite understand me. Shall I repeat it?

MRS. H.—No! For pity's sake don't do that. It's too terrible, even in fun.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* I'll let her think it over for a while. But I ought to be horsewhipped.

MRS. H.—I want to know what you meant by what you said just now.

CAPT. G.—Exactly what I said. No less.

MRS. H.—But what have I done to deserve it? What *have* I done?

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* If she only wouldn't look at me. *(Aloud and very slowly, his eyes on his plate.)* D'you remember that evening in July, before the Rains broke, when you said that the end would have to come sooner or later . . . and you wondered for which of us it would come first?

MRS. H.—Yes! I was only joking. And you swore that, as long as there was breath in your body, it should *never* come. And I believed you.

CAPT. G.—*(Fingering menu-card.)* Well, it has. That's all.

A long pause, during which MRS. H. *bows her head*

and rolls the bread-twist into little pellets; G. *stares at the oleanders.*

MRS. H.—*(Throwing back her head and laughing naturally.)* They train us woman well, don't they, Pip?

CAPT. G.—*(Brutally, touching shirtstud.)* So far as the expression goes. *(Aside.)* It isn't in her nature to take things quietly. There'll be an explosion yet.

MRS. H.—*(With a shudder.)* Thank you. B-but red Indians allow people to wriggle when they're being tortured, I believe. *(Slips fan from girdle and fans slowly; rim of fan level with chin.)*

PARTNER ON LEFT.—Very close to-night, isn't it? You find it too much for you?

MRS. H.—Oh, no, not in the least. But they really ought to have punkahs, even in your cool Naini Tal, oughtn't they? *(Turns, dropping fan and raising eyebrows.)*

CAPT. G.—It's all right. *(Aside.)* Here comes the storm!

MRS. H.—*(Her eyes on the table-cloth; fan ready in right hand.)* It was very cleverly managed, Pip, and I congratulate you. You swore—you never contented yourself with merely saying a thing—you *swore* that, as far as lay in your power, you'd make my wretched life pleasant for me. And you've denied me the consolation of breaking down. I should have done it—indeed I should. A woman would hardly have thought of this refinement, my kind, considerate friend. *(Fan-guard as before.)* You have explained things so

tenderly and truthfully, too! You haven't spoken or written a word of warning, and you have let me believe in you till the last minute. You haven't condescended to give me your *reason* yet. No! A woman could not have managed it half so well. Are there many *men* like you in the world?

CAPT. G.—I'm sure I don't know. *(To khitmatgar.)* Ohé! *Simpkin do.*

MRS. H.—You call yourself a man of the world, don't you? Do men of the world behave like Devils when they do a woman the honor to get tired of her?

CAPT. G.—I'm sure I don't know. Don't speak so loud!

MRS. H.—Keep us respectable, O Lord, whatever happens! Don't be afraid of my compromising you. You've chosen your ground far too well, and I've been properly brought up. *(Lowering fan.)* Haven't you *any* pity, Pip, except for yourself?

CAPT. G.—Wouldn't it be rather impertinent of me to say that I'm sorry for you?

MRS. H.—I think you have said it once or twice before. You're growing very careful of my feelings. My God, Pip, I was a good woman once! You *said* I was. You've made me what I am. What are you going to do with me? What are you going to do with me? Won't you *say* that you are sorry? *(Helps herself to iced asparagus.)*

CAPT. G.—I am sorry for you, if you want the pity of such a brute as I am. I'm *awf'ly* sorry for you.

MRS. H.—Rather tame for a man of the world. Do you think that that admission clears you?

CAPT. G.—What can I do? I can only tell you what I think of myself. You can't think worse than that?

MRS. H.—Oh, yes, I can! And now, will you tell me the reason of all this? Remorse? Has Bayard been suddenly conscience-stricken?

CAPT. G.—*(Angrily, his eyes still lowered.)* No! The thing has come to an end on my side. That's all. *Mafisch!*

MRS. H.—"That's all. *Mafisch!*" As though I were a Cairene Dragoman. You used to make prettier speeches. D'you remember when you said . . . ?

CAPT. G.—For Heaven's sake don't bring that back! Call me anything you like and I'll admit it——

MRS. H.—But you don't care to be reminded of old lies? If I could hope to hurt you one-tenth as much as you have hurt me to-night . . . No, I wouldn't —I couldn't do it—liar though you are.

CAPT. G.—I've spoken the truth.

MRS. H.—My *dear* Sir, you flatter yourself. You have lied over the reason. Pip, remember that I know you as you don't know yourself. You have been everything to me, though you are . . . *(Fan-guard.)* Oh, what a contemptible *Thing* it is! And so you are merely tired of me?

CAPT. G.—Since you insist upon my repeating it—Yes.

MRS. H.—Lie the first. I wish I knew a coarser word. Lie seems so ineffectual in your case. The fire has just died out and there is no fresh one? Think for a minute, Pip, if you care whether I despise you more than I do. Simply *Mafisch,* is it?

CAPT. G.—Yes. *(Aside.)* I think I deserve this.

MRS. H.—Lie number two. Before the next glass chokes you, tell me her name.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* I'll make her pay for dragging Minnie into the business! *(Aloud.)* Is it likely?

MRS. H.—*Very* likely if you thought that it would flatter your vanity. You'd cry my name on the housetops to make people turn round.

CAPT. G.—I wish I had. There would have been an end of this business.

MRS. H.—Oh, no, there would not . . . And so you were going to be virtuous and *blase*, were you? To come to me and say:—"I've done with you. The incident is clo-osed." I ought to be proud of having kept such a man so long.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* It only remains to pray for the end of the dinner. *(Aloud.)* You know what I think of myself.

MRS. H.—As it's the only person in the world you ever *do* think of, and as I know your mind thoroughly, I do. You want to get it all over and . . . Oh, I can't keep you back! And you're going—think of it, Pip—to throw me over for another woman. And you swore that all other women were . . . Pip, my Pip! She *can't* care for you as I do. Believe me, she can't! Is it any one that I know?

CAPT. G.—Thank Goodness it isn't. *(Aside.)* I expected a cyclone, but not an earthquake.

MRS. H.—She *can't!* Is there anything that I wouldn't do for you—or haven't done? And to think

that I should take this trouble over you, knowing what you are! Do you despise me for it?

CAPT. G.—*(Wiping his mouth to hide a smile.) Again?* It's entirely a work of charity on your part.

MRS. H.—Ahhh! But I have no right to resent it . . . Is she better-looking than I? Who was it said—?

CAPT. G.—No—not that!

MRS. H.—I'll be more merciful than you were. Don't you know that all women are alike?

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Then this is the exception that proves the rule.

MRS. H.—*All* of them! I'll tell you anything you like. I will, upon my word! They only want the admiration—from anybody—no matter who—anybody! But there is always *one* man that they care for more than any one else in the world, and would sacrifice all the others to. Oh, *do* listen! I've kept the Vaynor man trotting after me like a poodle, and he believes that he is the only man I am interested in. I'll tell you what he said to me.

CAPT. G.—Spare him. *(Aside.)* I wonder what *his* version is.

MRS. H.—He's been waiting for me to look at him all through dinner. Shall I do it, and you can see what an idiot he looks?

CAPT. G.—"But what imports the nomination of this gentleman?"

MRS. H.—Watch! *(Sends a glance to the Vaynor man, who tries vainly to combine a mouthful of ice-pudding, a smirk of self-satisfaction, a glare of intense*

devotion, and the stolidity of a British dining countenance.)

CAPT. G.—*(Critically.)* He doesn't look pretty. Why didn't you wait till the spoon was out of his mouth?

MRS. H.—To amuse you. She'll make an exhibition of you as I've made of him; and people will laugh at you. Oh, Pip, can't you *see* that? It's as plain as the noonday sun. You'll be trotted about and told lies, and made a fool of like the others. *I* never made a fool of you, did I?

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* What a clever little woman it is!

MRS. H.—Well, what have you to say?

CAPT. G.—I feel better.

MRS. H.—Yes, I suppose so, after I have come down to your level. I couldn't have done it if I hadn't cared for you so much. I have spoken the truth.

CAPT. G.—It doesn't alter the situation.

MRS. H.—*(Passionately.)* Then she *has* said that she cares for you! Don't believe her, Pip. It's a lie—as black as yours to me!

CAPT. G.—Ssssteady! I've a notion that a friend of yours is looking at you.

MRS. H.—He! I *hate* him. He introduced you to me.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* And some people would like women to assist in making the laws. Introduction to imply condonement. *(Aloud.)* Well, you see, if you can remember so far back as that, I couldn't, in common politeness, refuse the offer.

MRS. H.—In common politeness! We have got beyond *that!*

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Old ground means fresh trouble. *(Aloud.)* On my honor——

MRS. H.—Your *what?* Ha, ha!

CAPT. G.—Dishonor, then. She's not what you imagine. I meant to——

MRS. H.—Don't tell me anything about her! She *won't* care for you, and when you come back, after having made an exhibition of yourself, you'll find me occupied with——

CAPT. G.—*(Insolently.)* You couldn't while I am alive. *(Aside.)* If that doesn't bring her pride to her rescue, nothing will.

MRS. H.—*(Drawing herself up.)* Couldn't do it? *I?* *(Softening.)* You're right. I don't believe I could—though you are what you are—a coward and a liar in grain.

CAPT. G.—It doesn't hurt so much after your little lecture—with demonstrations.

MRS. H.—One mass of vanity! Will nothing *ever* touch you in this life? There must be a Hereafter if it's only for the benefit of . . . But you will have it all to yourself.

CAPT. G.—*(Under his eyebrows.)* Are you so certain of that?

MRS. H.—I shall have had mine in this life; and it will serve me right.

CAPT. G.—But the admiration that you insisted on so strongly a moment ago? *(Aside.)* Oh, I *am* a brute!

MRS. H.—*(Fiercely.)* Will *that* console me for knowing that you will go to her with the same words, the same arguments, and the—the same pet names you used to me? And if she cares for you, you two will laugh over my story. Won't that be punishment heavy enough even for me—even for me? . . . And it's all useless. That's another punishment.

CAPT. G.—*(Feebly.)* Oh, come! I'm not so low as you think.

MRS. H.—Not now, perhaps, but you will be. Oh, Pip, if a woman flatters your vanity, there's nothing on earth that you would not tell her; and no meanness that you would not do. Have I known you so long without knowing that?

CAPT. G.—If you can trust me in nothing else—and I don't see why I should be trusted—you can count upon my holding my tongue.

MRS. H.—If you denied everything you've said this evening and declared it was all in fun *(a long pause)*, I'd trust you. Not otherwise. All I ask is, don't tell her my name. *Please* don't. A man might forget: a woman never would. *(Looks up table and sees hostess beginning to collect eyes.)* So it's all ended, through no fault of mine. . . . Haven't I behaved beautifully? I've accepted your dismissal, and you managed it as cruelly as you could, and I have made you respect my sex, haven't I? *(Arranging gloves and fan.)* I only pray that she'll know you some day as I know you now. I wouldn't be you then, for I think even your conceit will be hurt. I hope she'll pay you back the humiliation you've brought on me. I hope . . .

No. I don't. I *can't* give you up! I must have something to look forward to or I shall go crazy. When it's all over, come back to me, come back to me, and you'll find that you're my Pip still!

CAPT. G.—*(Very clearly.)* 'False move, and you pay for it. It's a girl!

MRS. H.—*(Rising.)* Then it *was* true! They said . . . but I wouldn't insult you by asking. A girl! *I* was a girl not very long ago. Be good to her, Pip. I dare say she believes in you.

Goes out with an uncertain smile. He watches her through the door, and settles into a chair as the men redistribute themselves.

CAPT. G.—Now, if there is any Power who looks after this world, will He kindly tell me what I have done? *(Reaching out for the claret, and half aloud.)* What *have* I done?

CURTAIN.

WITH ANY AMAZEMENT.

"And are not afraid with any amazement."
Marriage Service.

SCENE.—*A bachelor's bedroom—toilet-table arranged with unnatural neatness. Captain Gadsby asleep and snoring heavily. Time,* 10:30 A. M.—*a glorious autumn day at Simla. Enter delicately Captain Mafflin of Gadsby's regiment. Looks at sleeper, and shakes his head murmuring "Poor Gaddy." Performs violent fantasia with hair brushes on chair-back.*

CAPT. M.—Wake up, my sleeping beauty! *(Hoots.)*

"Uprouse ye, then, my merry merry men!
It is our opening day!
It is our opening da-ay!"

Gaddy, the little dicky-birds have been billing and cooing for ever so long; and I'm here!

CAPT. G.—*(Sitting up and yawning.)* 'Mornin'. This is awf'ly good of you, old fellow. Most awf'ly good of you. 'Don't know what I should do without you. 'Pon my soul, I don't. 'Haven't slept a wink all night.

CAPT. M.—I didn't get in till half-past eleven. 'Had a look at you then, and you seemed to be sleeping as soundly as a condemned criminal.

CAPT. G.—Jack, if you want to make those disgustingly worn-out jokes, you'd better go away. *(With*

portentous gravity.) It's the happiest day in my life.

CAPT. M.—*(Chuckling grimly.)* Not by a very long chalk, my son. You're going through some of the most refined torture you've ever known. But be calm. *I* am with you. 'Shun! *Dress!*

CAPT. G.—Eh! Wha-at?

CAPT. M.—*Do* you suppose that you are your own master for the next twelve hours? If you *do*, of course . . . *(Makes for the door.)*

CAPT. G.—No! For Goodness' sake, old man, don't do that! You'll see me through, won't you? I've been rugging up that beastly drill, and can't remember a line of it.

CAPT. M.—*(Overhauling G.'s uniform.)* Go and tub. Don't bother me. I'll give you ten minutes to dress in.

Interval, filled by the noise as of a healthy grampus splashing in the bath-room.

CAPT. G.—*(Emerging from dressing room.)* What time is it?

CAPT. M.—Nearly eleven.

CAPT. G.—Five hours more. O Lord!

CAPT. M.—*(Aside.)* 'First sign of funk, that. 'Wonder if it's going to spread. *(Aloud.)* Come along to breakfast.

CAPT. G.—I can't eat anything. I don't want any breakfast.

CAPT. M.—*(Aside.)* So early! *(Aloud.)* Captain Gadsby, I order you your breakfast, and a good good breakfast, too. None of your bridal airs and graces with me!

Leads G. downstairs, and stands over him while he eats two chops.

CAPT. G.—*(Who has looked at his watch thrice in the last five minutes.)* What time is it?

CAPT. M.—Time to come for a walk. Light up.

CAPT. G.—I haven't smoked for ten days, and I won't *now.* *(Takes cheroot which M. has cut for him, and blows smoke through his nose luxuriously.)* We aren't going down the Mall, are we?

CAPT. M.—*(Aside.)* They're all alike in these stages. *(Aloud.)* No, my Vestal. We're going along the quietest road we can find.

CAPT. G.—Any chance of seeing Her?

CAPT. M.—Innocent! No! Come along, and, if you want me for the final obsequies, don't cut my eye out with your stick.

CAPT. G.—*(Spinning round.)* I say, isn't She the dearest creature that ever walked? What's the time? What comes after "wilt thou take this woman?"

CAPT. M.—You go for the ring. R'c'lect it'll be on the top of my right-hand little finger, and just be careful how you draw it off, because I shall have the Verger's fees somewhere in my glove.

CAPT. G.—*(Walking forward hastily.)* D—— the Verger! Come along! It's past twelve, and I haven't seen Her since yesterday evening. *(Spinning round again.)* She's an absolute angel, Jack, and She's a dashed deal too good for me. Look here, does She come up the aisle on my arm, or how?

CAPT. M.—If I thought that there was the least chance of your remembering anything for two consecu-

tive minutes, I'd tell you. Stop passaging about like that!

CAPT. G.—*(Halting in the middle of the road.)* I say, Jack.

CAPT. M.—Keep quiet for another ten minutes if you can, you lunatic, and *walk!*

The two tramp at five miles an hour for fifteen minutes.

CAPT. G.—What's the time? How about that cursed wedding-cake and the slippers? They don't throw 'em about in church, do they?

CAPT. M.—In-variably. The Padre leads off with his boots.

CAPT. G.—Confound your silly soul! Don't make fun of me. I can't stand it, and I won't!

CAPT. M.—*(Untroubled.)* So-ooo, old horse! You'll have to sleep for a couple of hours this afternoon.

CAPT. G.—*(Spinning round.)* I'm *not* going to be treated like a dashed child. Understand that!

CAPT. M.—*(Aside.)* Nerves gone to fiddle-strings. What a day we're having. *(Tenderly putting his hand on G.'s shoulder.)* My David, how long have you known this Jonathan? Would I come up here to make a fool of you—after all these years?

CAPT. G.—*(Penitently.)* I know, I know, Jack—but I'm as upset as I can be. Don't mind what I say. Just hear me run through the drill and see if I've got it all right:—

"To have and to hold for better or worse, as it was

in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, so help me God.—Amen."

CAPT. M.—*(Suffocating with suppressed laughter.)* Yes. That's about the gist of it. I'll prompt if you get into a hat.

CAPT. G.—*(Earnestly.)* Yes, you'll stick by me, Jack, won't you? I'm awf'ly happy, but I don't mind telling *you* that I'm in a blue funk!

CAPT. M.—*(Gravely.)* Are you? I should never have noticed it. You don't *look* like it.

CAPT. G.—Don't I? That's all right. *(Spinning round.)* On my soul and honor, Jack, She's the sweetest little angel that ever came down from the sky. There isn't a woman on earth fit to speak to Her!

CAPT. M.—*(Aside.)* And this is old Gaddy! *(Aloud.)* Go on if it relieves you.

CAPT. G.—You can laugh! That's all you wild asses of bachelors are fit for.

CAPT. M.—*(Drawling.)* You never *would* wait for the troop to come up. You aren't quite married yet, y'know.

CAPT. G.—Ugh! That reminds me. I don't believe I shall be able to get into my boots. Let's go home and try 'em on! *(Hurries forward.)*

CAPT. M.—Wouldn't be in *your* shoes for anything that Asia has to offer.

CAPT. G.—*(Spinning round.)* That just shows your hideous blackness of soul—your dense stupidity—your brutal narrow mindedness. There's only one fault about you. You're the best of good fellows, and I don't know what I should have done without you, but—you

aren't married. *(Wags his head gravely.)* Take a wife, Jack.

CAPT. M.—*(With a face like a wall.)* Ya-as. Whose for choice?

CAPT. G.—If you're going to be a blackguard, I'm going on . . . What's the time?

CAPT. M. *(Hums)*—

> "An' since 'twas very clear we drank only ginger-beer,
> Faith, there must ha' been some stingo in the ginger."

Come back, you maniac. I'm going to take you home, and you're going to lie down.

CAPT. G.—What on earth do I want to lie down for?

CAPT. M.—Give me a light from your cheroot and see.

CAPT. G.—*(Watching cheroot-butt quiver like a tuning-fork.)* Sweet state I'm in!

CAPT. M.—You are. I'll get you a peg and you'll go to sleep.

They return and M. compounds a four-finger peg.

CAPT. G.—O, *bus! bus!* It'll make me as drunk as an owl.

CAPT. M.—'Curious thing, 'twon't have the slightest effect on you. Drink it off, chuck yourself down there, and go to bye-bye.

CAPT. G.—It's absurd. I sha'n't sleep. I *know* I sha'n't!

Falls into heavy doze at end of seven minutes. CAPT. M. *watches him tenderly.*

CAPT. M.—Poor old Gaddy! I've seen a few turned off before, but never one who went to the gallows in

this condition. 'Can't tell how it affects 'em, though. It's the thoroughbreds that sweat when they're backed into double-harness. . . . And that's the man who went through the guns at Amdheran like a devil possessed of devils. *(Leans over* G.) But this is worse than the guns, old pal—worse than the guns, isn't it? *(G. turns in his sleep, and* M. *touches him clumsily on the forehead.)* Poor, dear old Gaddy! Going like the rest of 'em—going like the rest of 'em . . . Friend that sticketh closer than a brother . . . eight years. Dashed bit of a slip of a girl . . . eight weeks! And —where's your friend? *(Smokes disconsolately till church clock strikes three.)*

CAPT. M.—Up with you! Get into your kit.

CAPT. G.—Already? Isn't it too soon? Hadn't I better have a shave?

CAPT. M.—*No!* You're all right. *(Aside.)* He'd chip his chin to pieces.

CAPT. G.—What's the hurry?

CAPT. M.—You've got to be there first.

CAPT. G.—To be stared at?

CAPT. M.—Exactly. You're part of the show. Where's the burnisher? Your spurs are in a shameful state.

CAPT. G.—*(Gruffly.)* Jack, I'll be damned if you shall do that for me.

CAPT. M.—*(More gruffly.)* Dry up and get dressed! If I choose to clean your spurs, you're under *my* orders.

CAPT. G. *dresses.* M. *follows suit.*

CAPT. M.—*(Critically, walking round.)* M'yes, you'll do. Only don't look so like a criminal. Ring,

gloves, fees—that's all right for me. Let your mustache alone. Now, if the tats are ready, we'll go.

CAPT. G.—*(Nervously.)* It's much too soon. Let's light up! Let's have a peg! Let's——

CAPT. M.—Let's make bally asses of ourselves.

BELLS.—*(Without.)*

Good—peo—ple—all
To prayers—we call.

CAPT. M.—There go the bells! Come on—unless you'd rather not. *(They ride off.)*

BELLS.—

We honor the King
And Bride's joy do bring—
Good tidings we tell
And ring the Dead's knell.

CAPT. G.—*(Dismounting at the door of the Church.)* I say, aren't we much too soon? There are no end of people inside. I say, aren't we much too late? Stick by me, Jack! What the devil do I do?

CAPT. M.—Strike an attitude at the head of the aisle and wait for Her. *(G. groans as M. wheels him into position before three hundred eyes.)*

CAPT. M.—*(Imploringly.)* Gaddy, if you love me, for pity's sake, for the Honor of the Regiment, stand up! Chuck yourself into your uniform! Look like a man! I've got to speak to the Padre a minute. *(G. breaks into a gentle perspiration.)* If you wipe your face I'll *never* be your best man again. Stand *up!* *(G. trembles visibly.)*

CAPT. M.—*(Returning.)* She's coming now. Look

out when the music starts. There's the organ beginning to clack.

Bride steps out of 'rickshaw at Church door. G. catches a glimpse of her and takes heart.

ORGAN.—*(Diapason and bourdon.)*

> The Voice that breathed o'er Eden,
> That earliest marriage day,
> The primal marriage blessing,
> It hath not passed away.

CAPT. M.—*(Watching G.)* By Jove! He *is* looking well. 'Didn't think he had it in him

CAPT. G.—How long does this hymn go on for?

CAPT. M.—It will be over directly. *(Anxiously.)* Beginning to bleach and gulp? Hold on, Gaddy, and think o' the Regiment.

CAPT. G.—*(Measuredly.)* I say, there's a big brown lizard crawling up that wall.

CAPT. M.—My Sainted Mother! The last stage of collapse!

Bride comes up to left of altar, lifts her eyes once to G., who is suddenly smitten mad.

CAPT. G.—*(To himself again and again.)* Little Featherweight's a woman—a woman! And I thought she was a little girl.

CAPT. M.—*(In a whisper.)* From the halt—inward *wheel.*

CAPT. G. *obeys mechanically and the ceremony proceeds.*

PADRE.— . . . only unto her as long as ye both shall live?

CAPT. G.—*(His throat useless.) Ha—hmmm!*

CAPT. M.—Say you will or you won't. There's no second deal here.

Bride gives response with perfect coolness, and is given away by the father.

CAPT. G.—*(Thinking to show his learning.)* Jack, give me away now, *quick!*

CAPT. M.—You've given yourself away quite enough. Her *right* hand, man! Repeat! Repeat! "Theodore Philip." Have you forgotten your own name?

CAPT. G.—*stumbles through Affirmation, which Bride repeats without a tremor.*

CAPT. M.—Now the ring! Follow the Padre! Don't pull off my glove! Here it is! Great Cupid, he's found his voice!

G. *repeats Troth in a voice to be heard to the end of the Church and turns on his heel.*

CAPT. M.—*(Desperately.)* Rein back! Back to your troop! 'Tisn't half legal yet.

PADRE.— . . . joined together let no man put asunder.

CAPT. G. *paralyzed with fear, jibs after Blessing.*

CAPT. M.—*(Quickly.)* On your own front—one length. Take her with you. I don't come. You've nothing to say. *(CAPT. G. jingles up to altar.)*

CAPT. M.—*(In a piercing rattle meant to be a whisper.)* Kneel, you stiff-necked ruffian! Kneel!

PADRE.— . . . whose daughters ye are, so long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement.

CAPT. M.—Dismiss! Break off! Left wheel!

All troop to vestry. They sign.

CAPT. M.—Kiss Her, Gaddy.

CAPT. G.—*(Rubbing the ink into his glove.)* Eh! Wha—at?

CAPT. M.—*(Taking one pace to Bride.)* If you don't, I shall.

CAPT. G.—*(Interposing an arm.)* Not this journey!

General kissing, in which CAPT. G. *is pursued by unknown female.*

CAPT. G.—*(Faintly to* M.*)* This is Hades! Can I wipe my face now?

CAPT. M.—My responsibility has ended. Better ask *Missis* Gadsby.

CAPT. G. *winces as if shot, and procession is Mendelssohned out of Church to paternal roof, where usual tortures take place over the wedding-cake.*

CAPT. M.—*(At table.)* Up with you, Gaddy. They expect a speech.

CAPT. G.—*(After three minutes' agony.)* Ha—hmmm. *(Thunders of applause.)*

CAPT. M.—Doocid good, for a first attempt. Now go and change your kit while Mamma is weeping over —"the Missus." *(*CAPT. G. *disappears.* CAPT. M. *starts up tearing his hair.)* It's not *half* legal. Where are the shoes? Get an *ayah.*

AYAH.—Missie Captain Sahib done gone *band karo* all the *jutis.*

CAPT. M.—*(Brandishing scabbarded sword.)* Woman, produce those shoes! Some one lend me a bread knife. We mustn't crack Gaddy's head more than it is. *(Slices heel off white satin slipper and puts*

slipper up his sleeve.) Where is the Bride? *(To the company at large.)* Be tender with that rice. It's a heathen custom. Give me the big bag.

. . . . . .

Bride slips out quietly into 'rickshaw and departs towards the sunset.

CAPT. M.—*(In the open.)* Stole away, by Jove! So much the worse for Gaddy! Here he is. Now, Gaddy, this'll be livelier than Amdheran! Where's your horse?

CAPT. G.—*(Furiously, seeing that the women are out of earshot.)* Where the —— is my *Wife?*

CAPT. M.—Half-way to Mahasu by this time. You'll have to ride like Young Lochinvar.

Horse comes round on his hind legs; refuses to let G. *handle him.*

CAPT. G.—O, you will, will you? Get round, you brute—you hog—you beast! Get *round!*

Wrenches horse's head over, nearly breaking lower jaw; swings himself into saddle, and sends home both spurs in the midst of a spattering gale of Best Patna.

CAPT. M.—For your life and your love—ride, Gaddy!—And God bless you!

Throws half a pound of rice at G., *who disappears, bowed forward on the saddle in a cloud of sunlit dust.*

CAPT. M.—I've lost old Gaddy. *(Lights cigarette and strolls off, singing absently)* :—

"You may carve it on his tombstone, you may cut it on his card,
That a young man married is a young man marred!"

MISS DEERCOURT.—*(From her horse.)* Really, Captain Mafflin! You are more plain-spoken than polite!

CAPT. M.—*(Aside.)* They say marriage is like cholera. 'Wonder who'll be the next victim.

White satin slipper slides from his sleeve and falls at his feet. Left wondering.

CURTAIN.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

"And ye shall be as—Gods!"

SCENE.—*Thymy grass-plot at back of the Mahasu dak-bungalow, overlooking little wooded valley. On the left, glimpse of the Dead Forest of Fagoo; on the right, Simla Hills. In background, line of the Snows.* CAPTAIN GADSBY, *now one week a husband, is smoking the pipe of peace on a rug in the sunshine. Banjo and tobacco-pouch on rug. Overhead, the Fagoo eagles.* MRS. G. *comes out of bungalow.*

MRS. G.—My husband!

CAPT. G.—*(Lazily, with intense enjoyment.) Eh,* wha-at? Say that again.

MRS. G.—I've written to Mamma and told her that we shall be back on the 17th.

CAPT. G.—Did you give her my love?

MRS. G.—No, I kept all that for myself. *(Sitting down by his side.)* I thought you wouldn't mind.

CAPT. G.—*(With mock sternness.)* I object awf'ly. How did you know that it was yours to keep?

MRS. G.—I guessed, Phil.

CAPT. G.—*(Rapturously.) Little* Featherweight!

MRS. G.—I *won't* be called those sporting pet names, bad boy.

CAPT. G.—You'll be called anything I choose. Has it ever occurred to you, Madam, that you are my Wife?

MRS. G.—It has. I haven't ceased wondering at it yet.

CAPT. G.—Nor I. It seems so strange; and yet, somehow, it doesn't. *(Confidently.)* You see, it could have been no one else.

MRS. G.—*(Softly.)* No. No one else—for me or for you. It must have been *all* arranged from the beginning. Phil, tell me again what made you care for me.

CAPT. G.—How could I help it? You were *you*, you know.

MRS. G.—Did you ever want to help it? Speak the truth!

CAPT. G.—*(A twinkle in his eye.)* I did, darling, just at the first. But only at the very first. *(Chuckles.)* I called you—stoop low and I'll whisper—"a little beast." Ho! Ho! Ho!

MRS. G.—*(Taking him by the mustache and making him sit up.)* "A—little—beast!" Stop laughing over your crime! And yet you had the—the—awful cheek to propose to me!

CAPT. G.—I'd changed my mind then. And you weren't a little beast any more.

MRS. G.—Thank you, Sir. And when was I ever?

CAPT. G.—*Never!* But that first day, when you gave me tea in that peach-colored muslin gown thing, you looked—you did indeed, dear—such an absurd little mite. And I didn't know what to say to you.

MRS. G.—*(Twisting mustache.)* So you said "little beast." Upon my word, Sir! *I* called *you* a

"Crrrreature," but I wish now I had called you something worse.

CAPT. G.—*(Very meekly.)* I apologize, but you're hurting me awf'ly. *(Interlude.)* You're welcome to torture me again on those terms.

MRS. G.—Oh, *why* did you let me do it?

CAPT. G.—*(Looking across valley.)* No reason in particular, but—if it amused you or did you any good—you might—wipe those dear little boots of yours on me.

MRS. G.—*(Stretching out her hands.)* Don't! Oh, don't! Philip, my King, *please* don't talk like that. It's how *I* feel. You're so much too good for me. So much too good!

CAPT. G.—Me! I'm not fit to put my arm round you. *(Puts it round.)*

MRS. G.—Yes, you are. But I—what have I ever done?

CAPT. G.—Given me a wee bit of your heart, haven't you, my Queen?

MRS. G.—*That's* nothing. Any one would do *that*. They cou—couldn't help it.

CAPT. G.—Pussy, you'll make me horribly conceited. Just when I was beginning to feel so humble, too.

MRS. G.—Humble! I don't believe it's in your character.

CAPT. G.—What do you know of my character, Impertinence?

MRS. G.—Ah, but I shall, sha'n't I, Phil? I shall have time in all the years and years to come, to know

everything about you; and there will be no secrets between us.

CAPT. G.—Little witch; I believe you know me thoroughly already.

MRS. G.—I think I can guess. You're selfish.

CAPT. G.—Yes.

MRS. G.—Foolish?

CAPT. G.—*Very.*

MRS. G.—And a dear?

CAPT. G.—That is as my lady pleases.

MRS. G.—Then your lady *is* pleased. *(A pause.)* D'you know that we're two solemn, serious, grown-up people——

CAPT. G.—*(Tilting her straw hat over her eyes.)* You grown up! Pooh! You're a baby.

MRS. G.—And we're talking nonsense.

CAPT. G.—Then let's go on talking nonsense. I rather like it. Pussy, I'll tell you a secret. Promise not to repeat?

MRS. G.—Ye—es. Only to you.

CAPT. G.—I love you.

MRS. G.—Re-ally! For how long?

CAPT. G.—For ever and ever.

MRS. G.—That's a long time.

CAPT. G.—Think so? It's the shortest *I* can do with.

MRS. G.—You're getting quite clever.

CAPT. G.—I'm talking to *you.*

MRS. G.—Prettily turned. Hold up your stupid old head and I'll pay you for it.

CAPT. G.—*(Affecting supreme contempt.)* Take it yourself if you want it.

MRS. G.—I've a great mind to . . . and I will! *(Takes it, and is repaid with interest.)*

CAPT. G.—Little Featherweight, it's my opinion that we *are* a couple of idiots.

MRS. G.—We're the only two sensible people in the world! Ask the eagle. He's coming by.

CAPT. G.—Ah! I dare say he's seen a good many "sensible people" at Mahasu. They say that those birds live for ever so long.

MRS. G.—How long?

CAPT. G.—A hundred and twenty years.

MRS. G.—A hundred and twenty years! O-oh! And in a hundred and twenty years where will these two sensible people be?

CAPT. G.—What *does* it matter so long as we are together now?

MRS. G.—*(Looking round the horizon.)* Yes. Only you and I—I and you—in the whole wide, wide world until the end. *(Sees the line of the Snows.)* How big and quiet the hills look! D'you think they care for us?

CAPT. G.—'Can't say I've consulted 'em particularly. *I* care, and that's enough for me.

MRS. G.—*(Drawing nearer to him.)* Yes, now . . . but afterwards. What's that little black blur on the Snows?

CAPT. G.—A snowstorm, forty miles away. You'll see it move, as the wind carries it across the face of that spur, and then it will be all gone.

MRS. G.—And then it will be all gone. *(Shivers.)*

CAPT. G.—*(Anxiously.)* 'Not chilled, pet, are you? 'Better let me get your cloak.

MRS. G.—No. Don't leave me, Phil. Stay here. I believe I am afraid. Oh, why are the hills so *horrid!* Phil, promise me, promise me that you'll always, *always* love me.

CAPT. G.—What's the trouble, darling? I can't promise any more than I have; but I'll promise that again and again if you like.

MRS. G.—*(Her head on his shoulder.)* *Say* it, then —say it! N-no—don't! The—the—eagles would laugh. *(Recovering.)* My husband, you've married a little goose.

CAPT. G.—*(Very tenderly.)* Have I? I am content whatever she is, so long as she is mine.

MRS. G.—*(Quickly.)* Because she is yours or because she is me mineself?

CAPT. G.—Because she is both. *(Piteously.)* I'm not clever, dear, and I don't think I can make myself understood properly.

MRS. G.—*I* understand. Pip, will you tell me something?

CAPT. G.—Anything you like. *(Aside.)* I wonder what's coming now.

MRS. G.—*(Haltingly, her eyes lowered.)* You told me once in the old days—centuries and centuries ago—that you had been engaged before. I didn't say anything—*then.*

CAPT. G.—*(Innocently.)* Why not?

MRS. G.—*(Raising her eyes to his.)* Because—be-

cause I was afraid of losing you, my heart. But now—tell about it—*please.*

CAPT. G.—There's nothing to tell. I was awf'ly old then—nearly two and twenty—and she was *quite* that.

MRS. G.—That means she was older than you. I shouldn't like her to have been younger. Well?

CAPT. G.—Well, I fancied myself in love and raved about a bit, and—oh, yes, by Jove! I made up poetry. Ha! ha!

MRS. G.—You never wrote any for *me!* What happened?

CAPT. G.—I came out here, and the whole thing went *phut.* She wrote to say that there had been a mistake, and then she married.

MRS. G.—Did she care for you much?

CAPT. G.—No. At least she didn't show it as far as I remember.

MRS. G.—As far as you remember! Do you remember her name? *(Hears it and bows her head.)* Thank you, my husband.

CAPT. G.—Who but you had the right? Now, Little Featherweight, have you ever been mixed up in any dark and dismal tragedy?

MRS. G.—If you call me Mrs. Gadsby, p'raps I'll tell.

CAPT. G.—*(Throwing Parade rasp into his voice.)* Mrs. Gadsby, confess!

MRS. G.—Good Heavens, Phil! I never knew that you could speak in that terrible voice.

CAPT. G.—You don't know half my accomplishments yet. Wait till we are settled in the Plains, and I'll show

you how I bark at my troop. You were going to say, darling?

MRS. G.—I—I don't like to, after that voice. *(Tremulously.)* Phil, never you *dare* to speak to me in that tone, whatever I may do!

CAPT. G.—My poor little love! Why, you're shaking all over. I *am* so sorry. Of course I never meant to upset you. Don't tell me anything. I'm a brute.

MRS. G.—No, you aren't, and I *will* tell. . . There was a man.

CAPT. G.—*(Lightly.)* Was there? Lucky man!

MRS. G.—*(In a whisper.)* And I thought I cared for him.

CAPT. G.—Still luckier man! Well?

MRS. G.—And I thought I cared for him—and I didn't—and then you came—and I cared for you very, *very* much indeed. That's all. *(Face hidden.)* You aren't angry, are you?

CAPT. G.—Angry? Not in the least. *(Aside.)* Good Lord, what have I done to deserve this angel?

MRS. G.—*(Aside.)* And he never asked for the name! How funny men are! But perhaps it's as well.

CAPT. G.—That man will go to heaven because you once thought you cared for him. 'Wonder if you'll ever drag me up there?

MRS. G.—*(Firmly.)* 'Sha'n't go if you don't.

CAPT. G.—Thanks. I say, Pussy, I don't know much about your religious beliefs. You were brought up to believe in heaven and all that, weren't you?

MRS. G.—Yes. But it was a pincushion heaven, with hymn-books in all the pews.

CAPT. G.—*(Wagging his head with intense conviction.)* Never mind. There is a *pukka* heaven.

MRS. G.—Where do you bring that message from, my prophet?

CAPT. G.—Here! Because we care for each other. So it's all right.

MRS. G.—*(As a troop of langurs crash through the branches.)* So it's all right. But Darwin says that we came from *those!*

CAPT. G.—*(Placidly.)* Ah! Darwin was never in love with an angel. That settles it. Sstt, you brutes! Monkeys, indeed! You shouldn't read those books.

MRS. G.—*(Folding her hands.)* If it pleases my Lord the King to issue proclamation.

CAPT. G.—Don't, dear one. There are no orders between us. Only I'd *rather* you didn't. They lead to nothing, and bother people's heads.

MRS. G.—Like your first engagement.

CAPT. G.—*(With an immense calm.)* That was a necessary evil and led to you. Are *you* nothing?

MRS. G.—Not so very much, am I?

CAPT. G.—All this world and the next to me.

MRS. G.—*(Very softly.)* My boy of boys! Shall I tell *you* something?

CAPT. G.—Yes, if it's not dreadful—about other men.

MRS. G.—It's about my own bad little self.

CAPT. G.—Then it must be good. Go on, dear.

MRS. G.—*(Slowly.)* I don't know why I'm telling you, Pip; but if ever you marry again—*(Interlude.)* Take your hand from my mouth or I'll *bite!*—In the

future, then remember . . . I don't know quite how to put it!

CAPT. G.—*(Snorting indignantly.)* Don't try. "Marry again," indeed!

MRS. G.—I must. Listen, my husband. Never, never, *never* tell your wife anything that you do not wish her to remember and think over all her life. Because a woman—yes, I am a woman, Sir—*can't* forget.

CAPT. G.—By Jove, how do *you* know that?

MRS. G.—*(Confusedly.)* I don't. I'm only guessing. I am—I was—a silly little girl; but I feel that I know so much, oh, so very much more than you, dearest. To begin with, I'm your wife.

CAPT. G.—So I have been led to believe.

MRS. G.—And I shall want to know every one of your secrets—to share everything you know with you. *(Stares round desperately for lucidity and coherence.)*

CAPT. G.—So you shall, dear, so you shall—but don't look like that.

MRS. G.—For your own sake don't stop me, Phil. I shall never talk to you in this way again. You must *not* tell me! At least, not now. Later on, when I'm an old matron it won't matter, but if you love me, be very good to me now; for this part of my life I shall *never* forget! Have I made you understand?

CAPT. G.—I think so, child. Have I said anything yet that you disapprove of?

MRS. G.—Will you be *very* angry? That—that voice, and what you said about the engagement—

CAPT. G.—But you *asked* to be told that, darling.

MRS. G.—And *that's* why you shouldn't have told

me! You must be the judge, and, oh, Pip, dearly as I love you, I sha'n't be able to help you! I shall hinder you, and you must judge in spite of me!

CAPT. G.—*(Meditatively.)* We have a great many things to find out together, God help us both—say so, Pussy—but we shall understand each other better every day; and I think I'm beginning to see now. How in the world did you come to know just the importance of giving me just that lead?

MRS. G.—I've told you that I *don't* know. Only somehow it seemed that, in all this new life, I was being guided for your sake as well as my own.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Then Mafflin was right! They know, and we—we're blind—all of us. *(Lightly.)* 'Getting a little beyond our depth, dear, aren't we? I'll remember, and, if I fail, let me be punished as I deserve.

MRS. G.—There shall be no punishment. We'll start into life together from here—you and I—and no one else.

CAPT. G.—And no one else. *(A pause.)* Your eyelashes are all wet, Sweet? Was there ever such a quaint little Absurdity?

MRS. G.—Was there ever such nonsense talked before?

CAPT. G.—*(Knocking the ashes out of his pipe.)* 'Tisn't what we say, it's what we don't say, that helps. And it's all the profoundest philosophy. But no one would understand—even if it were put into a book.

MRS. G.—The idea! No—only we ourselves, or people like ourselves—if there are any people like us.

CAPT. G.—*(Magisterially.)* All people, not like ourselves, are blind idiots.

MRS. G.—*(Wiping her eyes.)* Do you think, then, that there are any people as happy as we are?

CAPT. G.—'Must be—unless we've appropriated all the happiness in the world.

MRS. G.—*(Looking towards Simla.)* Poor dears! Just fancy if we have!

CAPT. G.—Then we'll hang on to the whole show, for it's a great deal too jolly to lose—eh, wife o' mine?

MRS. G.—Oh, Pip, Pip! How much of you is a solemn, married man and how much a horrid, slangy schoolboy?

CAPT. G.—When you tell me how much of you was eighteen last birthday and how much is as old as the Sphinx and twice as mysterious, perhaps I'll attend to you. Lend me that banjo. The spirit moveth me to yowl at the sunset.

MRS. G.—Mind! It's not tuned. Ah! How that jars!

CAPT. G.—*(Turning pegs.)* It's amazingly difficult to keep a banjo to proper pitch.

MRS. G.—It's the same with all musical instruments. What shall it be?

CAPT. G.—"Vanity," and let the hills hear. *(Sings through the first and half of the second verse. Turning to* MRS. G.*)* Now, chorus! Sing, Pussy!

BOTH TOGETHER.—*(Con brio, to the horror of the monkeys who are settling for the night.)*

"Vanity, all is Vanity," said Wisdom, scorning me—
I clasped my true Love's tender hand and answered frank
and free—ee:
"If this be Vanity who'd be wise?
If this be Vanity who'd be wise?
If this be Vanity who'd be wi—ise?
(*Crescendo.*)—Vanity let it be!"

MRS. G.—*(Defiantly to the gray of the evening sky.)* "Vanity let it be!"

ECHO.—*(From the Fagoo spur.)* Let it be!

CURTAIN.

FATIMA.

"And you may go into every room of the house and see everything that is there, but into the Blue Room you must *not* go."—*The Story of Blue Beard.*

SCENE.—*The* GADSBYS' *bungalow in the Plains. Time,* 11 A. M., *on a Sunday morning.* CAPT. GADSBY, *in his shirt-sleeves, is bending over a complete set of Hussar's equipment, from saddle to picketing-rope, which is neatly spread over the floor of his study. He is smoking an unclean briar, and his forehead is puckered with thought.*

CAPT. G.—*(To himself, fingering a headstall.)* Jack's an ass! There's enough brass on this to load a mule . . . and, if the Americans know anything about anything, it can be cut down to a bit only. 'Don't want the watering-bridle, either. Humbug! . . . Half a dozen sets of chains and pulleys for the same old horse! *(Scratching his head.)* Now, let's consider it all over from the beginning. By Jove, I've forgotten the scale of weights! Ne'er mind. 'Keep the bit only, and eliminate every boss from the crupper to the breast-plate. No breastplate at all. Simple leather strap across the breast—like the Russians. Hi! Jack never thought of *that!*

MRS. G.—*(Entering hastily, her hand bound in a cloth.)* Oh, Pip! I've scalded my hand over that horrid, horrid Tiparee jam.

CAPT. G.—*(Absently.)* Eh! Wha-at?

MRS. G.—*(With round-eyed reproach.)* I've scalded it *aw*-fully! Aren't you sorry? And I *did* so want that jam to jam properly.

CAPT. G.—Poor little woman! Let me kiss the place and make it well. *(Unrolling bandage.)* You small sinner! Where's that scald? I can't see it.

MRS. G.—On the top of the little finger. There!—It's a most 'normous big burn!

CAPT. G.—*(Kissing little finger.)* Baby! Let Hyder look after the jam. You know I don't care for sweets.

MRS. G.—In-deed? . . . Pip!

CAPT. G.—Not of that kind, anyhow. And now run along, Minnie, and leave me to my own base devices. I'm busy.

MRS. G.—*(Calmly settling herself in long chair.)* So I see. What a mess you're making! Why have you brought all that smelly leather stuff into the house?

CAPT. G.—To play with. Do you mind, dear?

MRS. G.—Let *me* play, too. I'd like it.

CAPT. G.—I'm afraid you wouldn't, Pussy. . . . Don't you think that jam will burn, or whatever it is that jam does when it's not looked after by a clever little housekeeper?

MRS. G.—I thought you said Hyder could attend to it. I left him in the veranda, stirring—when I hurt myself so.

CAPT. G.—*(His eye returning to the equipment.)* Po-oor little woman! . . . Three pound four and seven is three eleven, and that can be cut down to two

eight, with just a *lee*-tle care, without weakening anything. Farriery is all rot in incompetent hands. What's the use of a shoe-case when a man's scouting? He can stick it on with a lick—like a stamp—the shoe! Skittles!

MRS. G.—What's skittles? Pah! What *is* this leather cleaned with?

CAPT. G.—Cream and champagne and . . . Look here, dear, do you really want to talk to me about anything important?

MRS. G.—No. I've done my accounts, and I thought I'd like to see what you're doing.

CAPT. G.—Well, love, now you've seen and . . . Would you mind? . . . That is to say . . . Minnie, I really *am* busy.

MRS. G.—You want me to go?

CAPT. G.—Yes, dear, for a little while. This tobacco will hang in your dress, and saddlery doesn't interest you.

MRS. G.—Everything you do interests me, Pip.

CAPT. G.—Yes, I know, I know, dear. I'll tell you all about it some day when I've put a head on this thing. In the meantime . . .

MRS. G.—I'm to be turned out of the room like a troublesome child?

CAPT. G.—No-o. I don't mean that exactly. But, you see, I shall be tramping up and down, shifting these things to and fro, and I shall be in your way. Don't you think so?

MRS. G.—Can't I lift them about? Let me try. *(Reaches forward to trooper's saddle.)*

CAPT. G.—Good gracious, child, don't touch it. You'll hurt yourself. *(Picking up saddle.)* Little girls aren't expected to handle *numdahs*. Now, where would you like it put? *(Holds saddle above his head.)*

MRS. G.—*(A break in her voice.)* Nowhere. Pip, how good you are—and how strong! Oh, what's that ugly red streak inside your arm?

CAPT. G.—*(Lowering saddle quickly.)* Nothing. It's a mark of sorts. *(Aside.)* And Jack's coming to tiffin with *his* notions all cut and dried!

MRS. G.—I know it's a mark, but I've never seen it before. It runs all up the arm. What is it?

CAPT. G.—A cut—if you want to know.

MRS. G.—Want to know! Of course I do! I can't have my husband cut to pieces in this way. How did it come? Was it an accident? Tell me, Pip.

CAPT. G.—*(Grimly.)* No. 'Twasn't an accident. I got it—from a man—in Afghanistan.

MRS. G.—In action? Oh, Pip, and you *never* told me!

CAPT. G.—I'd forgotten all about it.

MRS. G.—Hold up your arm! What a horrid, ugly scar! Are you sure it doesn't hurt now? How did the man give it to you?

CAPT. G.—*(Desperately looking at his watch.)* With a knife. I came down—Old Man Loo did, that's to say—and fell on my leg, so I couldn't run. And then this man came up and began chopping at me as I sprawled.

MRS. G.—Oh, don't, don't! That's enough! . . . Well, what happened?

CAPT. G.—I couldn't get to my holster, and Mafflin came round the corner and stopped the performance.

MRS. G.—How? He's such a lazy man, I don't believe he did.

CAPT. G.—Don't you. I don't think the man had much doubt about it. Jack cut his head off.

MRS. G.—Cut—his—head—off! "With one blow" as they say in the books?

CAPT. G.—I'm not sure. I was too interested in myself to know much about it. Anyhow, the head was off, and Jack was punching old Van Loo in the ribs to make him get up. Now you know all about it, dear, and now . . .

MRS. G.—You want me to go, of course. You never told me about this, though I've been married to you for *ever* so long; and you never *would* have told me if I hadn't found out; and you never *do* tell me anything about yourself, or what you do, or what you take an interest in.

CAPT. G.—Darling, I'm always with you, aren't I?

MRS. G.—Always in my pocket, you were going to say. I know you are; but you are always *thinking* away from me.

CAPT. G.—*(Trying to hide a smile.)* Am I? I wasn't aware of it. I'm awf'ly sorry.

MRS. G.—*(Piteously.)* Oh, don't make fun of me! Pip, you know what I mean. When you are reading one of those things about Cavalry, by that idiotic Prince—why doesn't he *be* a Prince instead of a stable-boy?

CAPT. G.—Prince Kraft a stable-boy! Oh, my Aunt! Never mind, dear! You were going to say?

MRS. G.—It doesn't matter. You don't care for what I say. Only—only you get up and walk about the room, staring in front of you, and then Mafflin comes in to dinner, and after I'm in the drawing-room I can hear you and him talking, and talking, and talking, about things I can't understand, and—oh, I get *so* tired and feel *so* lonely!—I don't want to complain and be a trouble, Pip; but I do—indeed I do!

CAPT. G.—My poor darling! I never thought of that. Why don't you ask some nice people in to dinner?

MRS. G.—Nice people! Where am I to find them? Horrid frumps! And if I *did,* I shouldn't be amused. You know I only want *you.*

CAPT. G.—And you have me surely, Sweetheart?

MRS. G.—I have not! Pip, why don't you take me into your life?

CAPT. G.—More than I do? That would be difficult, dear.

MRS. G.—Yes, I suppose it would—to you. I'm no help to you—no companion to you; and you like to have it so.

CAPT G.—Aren't you a little unreasonable, Pussy?

MRS. G.—*(Stamping her foot.)* I'm the most reasonable woman in the world—when I'm treated properly.

CAPT. G.—And since when have I been treating you improperly?

MRS. G.—Always—and since the beginning. You *know* you have.

CAPT. G.—I don't. But I'm willing to be convinced.

MRS. G.—*(Pointing to saddlery.)* There!

CAPT. G.—How do you mean?

MRS. G.—What does all *that* mean? Why am I not to be told? Is it so precious?

CAPT. G.—I forget its exact Government value just at present. It means that it is a great deal too heavy.

MRS. G.—Then why do you touch it?

CAPT. G.—To make it lighter. See here, little love, I've one notion and Jack has another, but we are both agreed that all this equipment is about thirty pounds too heavy. The thing is how to cut it down without weakening any part of it, and, at the same time, allowing the trooper to carry everything he wants for his own comfort—socks and shirts and things of that kind.

MRS. G.—Why doesn't he pack them in a little trunk?

CAPT. G.—*(Kissing her.)* Oh, you darling! Pack them in a little trunk, indeed! Hussars don't carry trunks, and it's a most important thing to make the horse do all the carrying.

MRS. G.—But why need *you* bother about it? You're not a trooper.

CAPT. G.—No; but I command a few score of him; and equipment is nearly everything in these days.

MRS. G.—More than *me?*

CAPT. G.—Stupid! Of course not; but it's a matter that I'm tremendously interested in, because if I or Jack, or I and Jack, hack out some sort of lighter saddlery and all that, it's possible that we may get it adopted.

MRS. G.—How?

CAPT. G.—Sanctioned at Home, where they will make a sealed pattern—a pattern that all the saddlers must copy—and so it will be used by all the regiments.

MRS. G.—And that interests you?

CAPT. G.—It's part of my profession, y'know, and my profession is a good deal to me. Everything in a soldier's equipment is important, and if we can improve that equipment, so much the better for the soldiers and for us.

MRS. G.—Who's "us"?

CAPT. G.—Jack and I, though Jack's notions are too radical. What's that big sigh for, Minnie?

MRS. G.—Oh, nothing . . . and you've kept all this a secret from me! Why?

CAPT. G.—Not a secret exactly, dear. I didn't say anything about it to you because I didn't think it would amuse you.

MRS. G.—And am I only made to be amused?

CAPT. G.—No, of course. I merely mean that it couldn't interest you.

MRS. G.—It's *your* work and—and if you'd let me, I'd count all these things up. If they are too heavy, you know by how much they are too heavy

and you must have a list of things made out to your scale of lightness, and—

CAPT. G.—I have got both scales somewhere in my head; but it's hard to tell how light you can make a headstall, for instance, until you've actually had a model made.

MRS. G.—But if you read out the list, I could copy it down, and pin it up there just above your table. Wouldn't that do?

CAPT. G.—It would be awf'ly nice, dear, but it would be giving you trouble for nothing. I can't work that way. I go by rule of thumb. I know the present scale of weights, and the other one—the one that I'm trying to work to—will shift and vary so much that I couldn't be certain, even if I wrote it down.

MRS. G.—I'm *so* sorry. I thought I might help. Is there anything else that I could be of use in?

CAPT. G.—*(Looking round the room.)* I can't think of anything. You're *always* helping me, you know.

MRS. G.—Am I? How?

CAPT. G.—You are you, of course, and as long as you're near me—I can't explain exactly, but it's in the air.

MRS. G.—And that's why you wanted to send me away?

CAPT. G.—That's only when I'm trying to do work—grubby work like this.

MRS. G.—Mafflin's better, then, isn't he?

CAPT. G.—*(Rashly.)* Of course he is. Jack and

I have been thinking down the same groove for two or three years about this equipment. It's our hobby, and it may really be useful some day.

MRS. G.—*(After a pause.)* And that's all that you have away from me!

CAPT. G.—It isn't very far away from you now. Take care that the oil on that bit doesn't come off on your dress.

MRS. G.—I wish—I wish so much that I could really help you. I believe I could . . . if I left the room. But that's not what I mean.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Give me patience! I wish she would go. *(Aloud.)* I assure you you can't do anything for me, Minnie, and I must really settle down to this. Where's my pouch?

MRS. G.—*(Crossing to writing-table.)* Here you are, Bear. What a mess you keep your table in!

CAPT. G.—Don't touch it. There's a method in my madness, though you mightn't think it.

MRS. G.—*(At table.)* I want to look. . . . Do you keep accounts, Pip?

CAPT. G.—*(Bending over saddlery.)* Of a sort. Are you rummaging among the Troop papers? Be careful.

MRS. G.—Why? I sha'n't disturb anything. Good gracious! I had no idea that you had anything to do with so many sick horses.

CAPT. G.—Wish I hadn't, but they insist on falling sick. Minnie, if I were you I really should not investigate those papers. You may come across something that you won't like.

MRS. G.—Why will you always treat me like a child? I know I'm not displacing the horrid things.

CAPT. G.—*(Resignedly.)* Very well, then. Don't blame me if anything happens. Play with the table and let me go on with the saddlery. *(Slipping hand into trousers-pocket.)* Oh, the deuce!

MRS. G.—*(Her back to G.)* What's that for?

CAPT. G.—Nothing. *(Aside.)* There's not much of importance in it, but I wish I'd torn it up.

MRS. G. *(Turning over contents of table.)* I know you'll hate me for this; but I do want to see what your work is like. *(A pause.)* Pip, what are "farcy-buds"?

CAPT. G.—Hah! Would you really like to know? They aren't pretty things.

MRS. G.—This Journal of Veterinary Science says they are of "absorbing interest." Tell me.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* It may turn her attention.

Gives a long and designedly loathsome account of glanders and farcy.

MRS. G.—Oh, that's enough. Don't go on!

CAPT. G.—But you wanted to know. . . . Then these things suppurate and matterate and spread—

MRS. G.—Pip, you're making me sick! You're a horrid, disgusting schoolboy.

CAPT. G.—*(On his knees among the bridles.)* You asked to be told. It's not my fault if you worry me into talking about horrors.

MRS. G.—Why didn't you say—No?

CAPT. G.—Good Heavens, child! Have you come in here simply to bully me?

MRS. G.—I bully *you?* How could I! You're so strong. *(Hysterically.)* Strong enough to pick me up and put me outside the door, and leave me there to cry. Aren't you?

CAPT. G.—It seems to me that you're an irrational little baby. Are you quite well?

MRS. G.—Do I look ill? *(Returning to table.)* Who is your lady friend with the big gray envelope and the fat monogram outside?

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Then it wasn't in the drawers, confound it. *(Aloud.)* "God made her, therefore let her pass for a woman." You remember what farcy-buds are like?

MRS. G.—*(Showing envelope.)* This has nothing to do with *them.* I'm going to open it. May I?

CAPT. G.—Certainly, if you want to. I'd sooner you didn't, though. I don't ask to look at your letters to the Deercourt girl.

MRS. G.—You'd *better* not, Sir! *(Takes letter from envelope.)* Now, may I look? If you say, no, I shall cry.

CAPT. G.—You've never cried in my knowledge of you, and I don't believe you could.

MRS. G.—I feel very like it to-day, Pip. Don't be hard on me. *(Reads letter.)* It begins in the middle, without any, "Dear Captain Gadsby," or anything. How funny!

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* No, it's not Dear Captain Gadsby, or anything, now. How funny!

MRS. G.—What a strange letter! *(Reads.)* "And

so the moth has come too near the candle at last, and has been singed into—shall I say Respectability? I congratulate him, and hope he will be as happy as he deserves to be." What does that mean? Is she congratulating you about our marriage?

CAPT. G.—Yes, I suppose so.

MRS. G.—*(Still reading letter.)* She seems to be a particular friend of yours.

CAPT. G.—Yes. She was excellent matron of sorts—a Mrs. Herriott—wife of a Colonel Herriott. I used to know some of her people at Home long ago—before I came out.

MRS. G.—Some Colonels' wives are young—as young as me. I knew one who was younger.

CAPT. G.—Then it couldn't have been Mrs. Herriott. She was old enough to have been your mother, dear.

MRS. G.—I remember now. Mrs. Scargill was talking about her at the Duffins' tennis, before you came for me, on Tuesday. Captain Mafflin said she was a "dear old woman." Do you know, I think Mafflin is a very clumsy man with his feet.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* Good old Jack! *(Aloud.)* Why, dear?

MRS. G.—He had put his cup down on the ground then, and he literally stepped into it. Some of the tea spirted over my dress—the gray one. I meant to tell you about it before.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* There are the makings of a strategist about Jack, though his methods are coarse.

(Aloud.) You'd better get a new dress then. *(Aside.)* Let us pray that that will turn her.

MRS. G.—Oh, it isn't stained in the least. I only thought that I'd tell you. *(Returning to letter.)* *What* an extraordinary person! *(Reads.)* "But need I remind you that you have taken upon yourself a charge of wardship"—what in the world is a charge of wardship?—"which, as you yourself know, may end in Consequences" . . .

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* It's safest to let 'em see everything as they come across it; but 'seems to me that there are exceptions to the rule. *(Aloud.)* I told you that there was nothing to be gained from rearranging my table.

MRS. G.—*(Absently.)* What *does* the woman mean? She goes on talking about Consequences—"almost inevitable Consequences" with a Capital C—for half a page. *(Flushing scarlet.)* Oh, good gracious! How abominable!

CAPT. G.—*(Promptly.)* Do you think so? Doesn't it show a sort of motherly interest in us? *(Aside.)* Thank Heaven, Harry always wrapped her meaning up safely! *(Aloud.)* *Is* it absolutely necessary to go on with the letter, darling?

MRS. G.—It's impertinent—it's simply horrid. What *right* has this woman to write in this way to you? She oughtn't to.

CAPT. G.—When you write to the Deercourt girl, I notice that you generally fill three or four sheets. Can't you let an old woman babble on paper once in a way? She means well.

MRS. G.—I don't care. She shouldn't write, and if she did, you ought to have shown me her letter.

CAPT. G.—Can't you understand why I kept it to myself, or must I explain at length—as I explained the farcy-buds?

MRS. G.—*(Furiously.)* Pip, I *hate* you! This is as bad as those idiotic saddle-bags on the floor. Never mind whether it would please me or not, you ought to have given it to me to read.

CAPT. G.—It comes to the same thing. You took it yourself.

MRS. G.—Yes, but if I hadn't taken it, you wouldn't have said a word. I think this Harriet Herriott—it's like a name in a book—is an interfering old Thing.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* So long as you thoroughly understand that she *is* old, I don't much care what you think. *(Aloud.)* Very good, dear. Would you like to write and tell her so? She's seven thousand miles away.

MRS. G.—I don't want to have anything to do with her, but you ought to have told me. *(Turning to last page of letter.)* And she patronizes *me*, too. *I've* never seen her! *(Reads.)* "I do not know how the world stands with you. In all human probability I shall never know; but whatever I may have said before, I pray for *her* sake more than for yours that all may be well. I have learnt what misery means, and I dare not wish that any one dear to you should share my knowledge."

CAPT. G.—Good God! Can't you leave that letter

alone, or, at least, can't you refrain from reading it aloud? I've been through it once. Put it back on the desk. Do you hear me?

MRS. G.—*(Irresolutely.)* I sh—sha'n't! *(Looks at G's eyes.)* Oh, Pip, *please!* I didn't mean to make you angry—'Deed, I didn't. Pip, I'm so sorry. I know I've wasted your time . . .

CAPT. G.—*(Grimly.)* You have. Now, will you be good enough to go . . . if there is nothing more in my room that you are anxious to pry into?

MRS. G.—*(Putting out her hands.)* Oh, Pip, don't look at me like that! I've never seen you look like that before and it hu-urts me! I'm sorry. I oughtn't to have been here at all, and—and—and—*(sobbing).* Oh, be good to me! Be good to me! There's only you—anywhere!

Breaks down in long chair, hiding face in cushions.

CAPT. G.—*(Aside.)* She doesn't know how she flicked me on the raw. *(Aloud, bending over chair.)* I didn't mean to be harsh, dear—I didn't really. You can stay here as long as you please, and do what you please. Don't cry like that. You'll make yourself sick. *(Aside.)* What on earth has come over her? *(Aloud.)* Darling, what's the matter with you?

MRS. G.—*(Her face still hidden.)* Let me go—let me go to my own room. Only—only say you aren't angry with me.

CAPT. G.—Angry with *you,* love! Of course not. I was angry with myself. I'd lost my temper over the saddlery. . . . Don't hide your face, Pussy. I want to kiss it.

Bends lower, MRS. G. *slides right arm round his neck. Several interludes and much sobbing.*

MRS. G.—*(In a whisper.)* I didn't mean about the jam when I came in to tell you—

CAPT. G.—Bother the jam and the equipment! *(Interlude.)*

MRS. G.—*(Still more faintly.)* My finger wasn't scalded at *all.* I—I wanted to speak to you about—about—something else, and—I didn't know how.

CAPT. G.—Speak away, then. *(Looking into her eyes.)* Eh! Wha—at? Minnie! Here, don't go away! You don't mean?

MRS. G.—*(Hysterically, backing to portiere and hiding her face in its folds.)* The—the Almost Inevitable Consequences! *(Flits through portiere as* G. *attempts to catch her, and bolts herself in her own room.)*

CAPT. G.—*(His arms full of portiere.)* Oh! *(Sitting down heavily in chair.)* I'm a brute—a pig—a bully, and a blackguard. My poor, poor little darling! "Made to be amused only!" . . .

CURTAIN.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW.

"Knowing Good and Evil."

SCENE.—*The Gadsbys' bungalow in the Plains, in June. Punkah-coolies asleep in veranda where* CAPT. GADSBY *is walking up and down.* DOCTOR'S *trap in porch.* JUNIOR CHAPLAIN *fluctuating generally and uneasily through the house. Time,* 3:40 A.M. *Heat* 94° *in veranda.*

DOCTOR.—*(Coming into veranda and touching* G. *on the shoulder.)* You had better go in and see her now.

CAPT. G.—*(The color of good cigar-ash.)* Eh, wha-at? Oh, yes, of course. What did you say?

DOCTOR.—*(Syllable by syllable.)* Go—in—to—the—room—and—see—her. She wants to speak to you. *(Aside, testily.)* I shall have *him* on my hands next.

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—*(In half lighted dining-room.)* Isn't there any——?

DOCTOR.—*(Savagely.)* Hsh, you little fool!

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—Let me do my work. Gadsby, stop a minute! *(Edges after* G.)

DOCTOR.—Wait till she sends for you at least—*at least.* Man alive, he'll kill you if you go in there! What are you bothering him for?

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—*(Coming into veranda.)* I've given him a stiff brandy-peg. He wants it. You've

forgotten him for the last ten hours and—forgotten yourself too.

G. *enters bedroom, which is lit by one nightlight. Ayah on the floor pretending to be asleep.*

VOICE.—*(From the bed.)* All down the street—*such* bonfires! *Ayah,* go and put them out! *(Appealingly.)* How can I sleep with an installation of the C. I. E. in my room? No—not C. I. E. Something else. *What* was it?

CAPT. G.—*(Trying to control his voice.)* Minnie, I'm here. *(Bending over bed.)* Don't you know me, Minnie? It's me—it's Phil—it's your husband.

VOICE.—*(Mechanically.)* It's me—it's Phil—it's your husband.

CAPT. G.—She doesn't know me! . . . It's your own husband, darling.

VOICE.—Your own husband, darling.

AYAH.—*(With an inspiration.)* *Memsahib* understanding all *I* saying.

CAPT. G.—Make her understand me then—quick!

AYAH.—*(Hand on* MRS. G.'s *forehead.)* *Memsahib!* Captain Sahib *aya.*

VOICE.—*Salam do. (Fretfully.)* I know I'm not fit to be seen.

AYAH.—*(Aside to* G.*)* Say "*marneen*" same as at breakfash.

CAPT. G.—Good morning, little woman. How are we to-day?

VOICE.—That's Phil. Poor old Phil. *(Viciously.)* Phil, you fool, I can't see you. Come nearer.

CAPT. G.—Minnie! Minnie! It's me—you know me?

VOICE.—*(Mockingly.)* Of course I do. Who does not know the man who was so cruel to his wife—almost the only one he ever had?

CAPT. G.—Yes, dear. Yes—of course, of course. But won't you speak to him? He wants to speak to you *so* much.

VOICE.—They'd never let him in. The Doctor would give *darwaza band* even if he were in the house. He'll never come. *(Despairingly.)* Oh, Judas! Judas! Judas!

CAPT. G.—*(Putting out his arms.)* They have let him in, and he always was in the house. Oh, my love—don't you know me?

VOICE.—*(In a half chant.)* "And it came to pass at the eleventh hour that this poor soul repented." It knocked at the gates, but they were shut—tight as a plaster—a great, burning plaster. They had pasted our marriage certificate all across the door, and it was made of red-hot iron—people really ought to be more careful, you know.

CAPT. G.—What *am* I to do? *(Takes her in his arms.)* Minnie! speak to me—to Phil.

VOICE.—What shall I say? Oh, tell me what to say before it's too late! They are all going away and I can't say anything.

CAPT. G.—Say you know me! Only say you know me!

DOCTOR.—*(Who has entered quietly.)* For pity's sake don't take it too much to heart, Gadsby. It's

this way sometimes. They won't recognize. They say all sorts of queer things—don't you *see?*

CAPT. G.—All right! All right! Go away now; she'll recognize me; you're bothering her. She *must* —mustn't she, Doc?

DOCTOR.—She will before . . . Have I your leave to try—

CAPT. G.—Anything you please, so long as she'll know me. It's only a question of—hours, isn't it?

DOCTOR.—*(Professionally.)* While there's life there's hope, y'know. But don't build on it.

CAPT. G.—I don't. Pull her together if it's possible. *(Aside.)* What have I done to deserve this?

DOCTOR.—*(Bending over bed.)* Now, Mrs. Gadsby! We shall be all right to-morrow. You *must* take it, or I sha'n't let Phil see you. It isn't nasty, is it?

VOICE.—Medicines! *Always* more medicines? Can't you leave me alone?

CAPT. G.—Oh, leave her in peace, Doc!

DOCTOR.—*(Stepping back.—aside.)* May I be forgiven if I've done wrong. *(Aloud.)* In a few minutes she ought to be sensible; but I daren't tell you to look for anything. It's only—

CAPT. G.—What? Go *on,* man.

DOCTOR.—*(In a whisper.)* Forcing the last rally.

CAPT. G.—Then leave us alone.

DOCTOR.—Don't mind what she says at first, if you can. They . . . they . . . they turn against those they love most sometimes in this . . . It's hard, but . . .

CAPT. G.—Am I her husband or are you? Leave us alone for whatever time we have together.

VOICE.—*(Confidentially.)* And we were engaged *quite* suddenly, Emma. I assure you that I never thought of it for a moment; but O my little Me!—I don't know *what* I should have done if he *hadn't* proposed.

CAPT. G.—She thinks of that Deercourt girl before she thinks of me. *(Aloud.)* Minnie!

VOICE.—Not from the shops, Mummy dear. You can get the real leaves from Kaintu, and *(laughing weakly)* never mind about the blossoms. . . . Dead white silk is only fit for widows, and I *won't* wear it. It's as bad as a winding-sheet. *(A long pause.)*

CAPT. G.—I never asked a favor yet. If there is anybody to listen to me, let her know me—even if I die too!

VOICE.—*(Very faintly.)* Pip, Pip dear.

CAPT. G.—I'm here, darling.

VOICE.—What has happened? They've been bothering me so with medicines and things, and they wouldn't let you come and see me. I was never ill before. Am I ill now?

CAPT. G.—You—you aren't quite well.

VOICE.—How funny! Have I been ill long?

CAPT. G.—Some days; but you'll be all right in a little time.

VOICE.—Do you think so, Pip? I don't feel well and . . . Oh! what *have* they done to my hair?

CAPT. G.—I d-d-don't know.

VOICE.—They've cut it off. What a shame!

CAPT. G.—It must have been to make your head cooler.

VOICE.—'Just like a boy's wig. Don't I look horrid?

CAPT. G.—Never looked prettier in your life, dear. *(Aside.)* How am I to ask her to say good-by?

VOICE.—I don't *feel* pretty. I feel very ill. My heart won't work. It's nearly dead inside me, and there's a funny feeling in my eyes. Everything seems the same distance—you and the almirah and the table—inside my eyes or miles away. What does it mean, Pip?

CAPT. G.—You're a little feverish, Sweetheart—very feverish. *(Breaking down.)* My love! my love! How can I let you go?

VOICE.—I thought so. Why didn't you tell me that at first?

CAPT. G.—What!

VOICE.—That I am going to . . . die.

CAPT. G.—But you aren't! You sha'n't.

AYAH.—*(Stepping into veranda after a glance at the bed.) Punkah chor do!*

VOICE.—It's hard, Pip. So very, *very* hard after one year—just one year. *(Wailing.)* And I'm only twenty. Most girls aren't even married at twenty. Can't they do *anything* to help me? I don't *want* to die.

CAPT. G.—Hush, dear. You won't.

VOICE.—What's the use of talking? *Help* me! You've never failed me yet. Oh, Phil, help me to keep alive. *(Feverishly.)* I don't believe you wish

me to live. You weren't a bit sorry when that horrid Baby thing died. I wish I'd killed Baby!

CAPT. G.—*(Drawing his hand across his forehead.)* It's more than a man's meant to bear—it's not right. *(Aloud.)* Minnie, love, I'd die for you if it would help.

VOICE.—No more death. There's enough already. Pip, don't *you* die, too.

CAPT. G.—I wish I dared.

VOICE.—It says:—"Till Death do us part." Nothing after that . . . and so it would be no use. It stops at the dying. *Why* does it stop there? Only such a very short life, too. Pip, I'm sorry we married.

CAPT. G.—No. Anything but that, Min!

VOICE.—Because you'll forget and I'll forget. Oh, Pip, *don't* forget! I always loved you, though I was cross sometimes. If I ever did anything that you didn't like, say you forgive me now.

CAPT. G.—You never did, darling. On my soul and honor you never did. I haven't a thing to forgive you.

VOICE.—I sulked for a whole week about those petunias. *(With a laugh.)* What a little wretch I was, and how grieved you were! Forgive me that, Pip.

CAPT. G.—There's nothing to forgive. It was my fault. They *were* too near the drive. For God's sake don't talk so, Minnie! There's such a lot to say and so little time to say it in.

VOICE.—Say that you'll always love me—until the end.

CAPT. G.—Until the end. *(Carried away.)* It's a lie. It *must* be, because we've loved each other. This isn't the end.

VOICE.—*(Relapsing into semi-delirium.)* My Church-service has an ivory cross on the back, and *it* says so, so it must be true. "Till Death do us part." . . . But that's a lie. *(With a parody of* G.'s *manner.)* A damned lie! *(Recklessly.)* Yes, I can swear as well as Trooper Pip. I can't make my head think, though. That's because they cut off my hair. How *can* one think with one's head all fuzzy? *(Pleadingly.)* Hold me, Pip! Keep me with you always and always. *(Relapsing.)* But if you marry the Thorniss girl when I'm dead, I'll come back and howl under our bedroom window all night. Oh, bother! You'll think I'm a jackal. Pip, what time is it?

CAPT. G.—A little before the dawn, dear.

VOICE.—I wonder where I shall be this time to-morrow?

CAPT. G.—Would you like to see the Padre?

VOICE.—Why should I? He'd tell me that I'm going to heaven; and that wouldn't be true, because you are here.—Do you recollect when he upset the cream-ice all over his trousers at the Gassers' tennis?

CAPT. G.—Yes, dear.

VOICE.—I often wondered whether he got another pair of trousers; but then his are so shiny all over that you really couldn't tell unless you were told. Let's call him in and ask.

CAPT. G.—*(Gravely.)* No. I don't think he'd like that. 'Your head comfy, Sweetheart?

VOICE.—*(Faintly, with a sigh of contentment.)* Yeth! Gracious, Pip, when *did* you shave last? Your chin's worse than the barrel of a musical box. . . . No, don't lift it up. I like it. *(A pause.)* You said you've never cried at all. You're crying all over my cheek.

CAPT. G.—I—I—I can't help it, dear.

VOICE.—How funny! I couldn't cry now to save my life. *(G. shivers.)* *I* want to sing.

CAPT. G.—Won't it tire you? 'Better not, perhaps.

VOICE.—Why? I *won't* be ordered about! *(Begins in a hoarse quaver):—*

> Minnie bakes oaten cake, Minnie brews ale,
> All because her Johnnie's coming home from the sea
> (That's parade, Pip).
> And she grows red as rose who was so pale:
> And "Are you sure the church-clock goes?" says she.

(Pettishly.) I knew I couldn't take the last note. How do the bass chords run? *(Puts out her hands and begins playing piano on the sheet.)*

CAPT. G.—*(Catching up hands.)* Ah! Don't do that, Pussy, if you love me.

VOICE.—Love you? Of course I do. Who else should it be? *(A pause.)*

VOICE.—*(Very clearly.)* Pip, I'm going now. Something's choking me cruelly. *(Indistinctly.)* Into the dark . . . without you, my heart. . . . But it's a lie, dear . . . we mustn't believe it. . . . Forever and ever, living or dead. Don't let me go, my husband —hold me tight. . . . They can't . . . whatever hap-

pens. *(A cough.)* Pip—*my* Pip! Not for always . . . and . . . so . . . soon! *(Voice ceases.)*

Pause of ten minutes. G. *buries his face in the side of the bed while Ayah bends over bed from opposite side and feels* Mrs. G.'s *breast and forehead.*

Capt. G.—*(Rising.) Doctor Sahib ko salaam do.*

Ayah.—*(Still by bedside with a shriek.)* Ai! Ai! *Tuta phuta!* My *Memsahib!* Not getting—not have got—*Pusseena agya! (Fiercely to* G.*)* Tum *jao Doctor Sahib ko jaldi! Oh!* my *Memsahib!*

Doctor.—*(Entering hastily.)* Come away, Gadsby. *(Bends over bed.)* Eh? The Dev— What inspired you to stop the punkah? Get out, man—go away—wait outside! *Go!* Here, Ayah! *(Over his shoulder to* G.*)* Mind, I promise nothing.

The dawn breaks as G. *stumbles into the garden.*

Capt. M.—*(Reining up at the gate on his way to parade and very soberly.)* Old man, how goes?

Capt. G.—*(Dazed.)* I don't quite know. Stay a bit. Have a drink or something. Don't run away. You're just getting amusing. Ha! Ha!

Capt. M.—*(Aside.)* What *am* I let in for? Gaddy has aged ten years in the night.

Capt. G.—*(Slowly, fingering charger's headstall.)* Your curb's too loose.

Capt. M.—So it is. Put it straight, will you? *(Aside.)* I shall be late for parade. Poor Gaddy!

Capt. G. *links and unlinks curb-chain aimlessly, and finally stands staring towards the veranda. The day brightens.*

Doctor.—*(Knocked out of professional gravity.*

tramping across flower-beds and shaking G.'s *hands.)* It's—it's—it's!—Gadsby, there's a fair chance—a *dashed* fair chance! The flicker, y'know. The sweat, y'know! I *saw* how it would be. The punkah, y'know. Deuced clever woman that Ayah of yours. Just at the right time. A *dashed* good chance! No—you don't go in. We'll pull her through yet. I promise on my reputation—under Providence. Send a man with this note to Bingle. Two heads better than one. 'Specially the Ayah! *We'll* pull her round. *(Retreats hastily to house.)*

CAPT. G.—*(His head on neck of* M.'s *charger.)* Jack! I bub—bub—believe, I'm going to make a bub—bub—bloody exhibition of myself.

CAPT. M.—*(Sniffing openly and feeling in his left cuff.)* I b-b—believe I'b doing it already. Old bad, what *cad* I say? I'b as pleased as—God *dab* you, Gaddy! You're one big idiot and I'b adother. *(Pulling himself together.)* Sit tight! Here comes the Devil dodger.

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—*(Who is not in the Doctor's confidence.)* We—we are only men in these things, Gadsby. I know that I can say nothing now to help—

CAPT. M.—*(Jealously.)* Then don't say it! Leave him alone. It's not bad enough to croak over. Here, Gaddy, take the *chit* to Bingle and ride hell for leather. It'll do you good. I can't go.

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—Do him good! *(Smiling.)* Give me the *chit* and I'll drive. Let him lie down. Your horse is blocking my cart—*please!*

CAPT. M.—*(Slowly, without reining back.)* I beg your pardon—I'll apologize. On paper if you like.

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—*(Flicking* M.'s *charger.)* That'll do, thanks. Turn in, Gadsby, and I'll bring Bingle back—ahem—"hell-for-leather."

CAPT. M.—*(Solus.)* It would ha' served me right if he had cut me across the face. He can drive too. I shouldn't care to go that pace in a bamboo cart. What a faith he must have in his Maker—of harness! Come *hup*, you brute! *(Gallops off to parade, blowing his nose, as the sun rises.)*

INTERVAL OF FIVE WEEKS.

MRS. G.—*(Very white and pinched, in morning wrapper at breakfast table.)* How big and strange the room looks, and oh, how glad I am to see it again! What dust, though! I must talk to the servants. Sugar, Pip? I've almost forgotten. *(Seriously.)* Wasn't I very ill?

CAPT. G.—Iller than I liked. *(Tenderly.)* Oh, you bad little Pussy, what a start you gave me!

MRS. G.—I'll never do it again.

CAPT. G.—You'd better not. And now get those poor pale cheeks pink again, or I shall be angry. Don't try to lift the urn. You'll upset it. Wait. *(Comes round to head of table and lifts urn.)*

MRS. G.—*(Quickly.) Khitmatgar, bow-archikhana se kettly lao. (Drawing down* G.'s *face to her own.)* Pip, dear, *I* remember.

CAPT. G.—What?

MRS. G.—That last terrible night.

CAPT. G.—Then just you forget all about it.

MRS. G.—*(Softly, her eyes filling.)* Never. It has brought us *very* close together, my husband. There! *(Interlude.)* I'm going to give Junda a *saree*.

CAPT. G.—I gave her fifty dibs.

MRS. G.—So she told me. It was a 'normous reward. Was I worth it? *(Several interludes.)* Don't! Here's the *khitmatgar*.—Two lumps or one, Sir?

CURTAIN.

THE SWELLING OF JORDAN.

"If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace wherein thou trustedst they have wearied thee, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

SCENE.—*The Gadsbys' bungalow in the Plains, on a January morning.* MRS. G. *arguing with bearer in back veranda.* CAPT. M. *rides up.*

CAPT. M.—'Mornin', Mrs. Gadsby. How's the Infant Phenomenon and the Proud Proprietor?

MRS. G.—You'll find them in the front veranda; go through the house. I'm Martha just now.

CAPT. M.—'Cumbered about with cares of *khitmatgars?* I fly.

Passes into front veranda, where GADSBY *is watching* GADSBY JUNIOR, *ætate ten months, crawling about the matting.*

CAPT. M.—What's the trouble, Gaddy—spoiling an honest man's Europe morning this way? *(Seeing* G. JUNIOR.*)* By Jove, that yearling's comin' on amazingly! Any amount of bone below the knee there.

CAPT. G.—Yes, he's a healthy little scoundrel. Don't you think his hair's growing?

M.—Let's have a look. Hi! Hst! Come here, General Luck, and we'll report on you.

MRS. G.—*(Within.)* What absurd name will you give him next? Why do you call him that?

M.—Isn't he our Inspector-General of Cavalry?

Doesn't he come down in his seventeen-two perambulator every morning the Pink Hussars parade? Don't wriggle, Brigadier. Give us your private opinion on the way the third squadron went past. 'Trifle ragged, weren't they?

G.—A bigger set of tailors than the new draft I don't wish to see. They've given me more than my fair share—knocking the squadron out of shape. It's sickening!

M.—When you're in command, you'll do better, young 'un. Can't you walk yet? Grip my finger and try. *(To G.)* 'Twon't hurt his hocks, will it?

G.—Oh, no. Don't let him flop, though, or he'll lick all the blacking off your boots.

Mrs. G.—*(Within.)* Who's destroying my son's character?

M.—And my Godson's. I'm ashamed of you, Gaddy. Punch your father in the eye, Jack! Don't you stand it! Hit him again!

G.—*(Sotto voce.)* Put The *Butcha* down and come to the end of the veranda. I'd rather the Wife didn't hear—just now.

M.—You look awf'ly serious. Anything wrong?

G.—'Depends on your view entirely. I say, Jack, you won't think more hardly of me than you can help, will you? Come further this way. . . . The fact of the matter is, that I've made up my mind—at least I'm thinking seriously of . . . cutting the Service.

M.—Hwhatt?

G.—Don't shout. I'm going to send in my papers.

M.—You! Are you mad?

G.—No—only married.

M.—Look here! What's the meaning of it all? You never intend to leave *us*. You *can't*. Isn't the best squadron of the best regiment of the best cavalry in all the world good enough for you?

G.—*(Jerking his head over his shoulder.)* She doesn't seem to thrive in this God-forsaken country, and there's The *Butcha* to be considered and all that, you know.

M.—Does she say that she doesn't like India?

G.—That's the worst of it. She won't for fear of leaving me.

M.—What are the Hills made for?

G.—Not for *my* wife, at any rate.

M.—You know too much, Gaddy, and—I don't like you any the better for it!

G.—Never mind that. She wants England, and The *Butcha* would be all the better for it. I'm going to chuck. You don't understand.

M.—*(Hotly.)* I understand *this*. One hundred and thirty-seven new horses to be licked into shape somehow before Luck comes round again; a hairy-heeled draft who'll give more trouble than the horses; a camp next cold weather for a certainty; ourselves the first on the roster; the Russian shindy ready to come to a head at five minutes' notice, and you, the best of us all, backing out of it all! Think a little, Gaddy. You *won't* do it.

G.—Hang it, a man has some duties towards his family, I suppose.

M.—I remember a man, though, who told me, the

night after Amdheran, when we were picketed under Jagai, and he'd left his sword—by the way, did you ever pay Ranken for that sword?—in an Utmanzai's head—that man told me that he'd stick by me and the Pinks as long as he lived. I don't blame him for not sticking by me—I'm not much of a man—but I *do* blame him for not sticking by the Pink Hussars.

G.—*(Uneasily.)* We were little more than boys then. Can't you see, Jack, how things stand? 'Tisn't as if we were serving for our bread. We've all of us, more or less, got the filthy lucre. I'm luckier than some, perhaps. There's no *call* for me to serve on.

M.—None in the world for you or for us, except the Regimental. If you don't choose to answer to *that,* of course . . .

G.—Don't be too hard on a man. You know that a lot of us only take up the thing for a few years and then go back to Town and catch on with the rest.

M.—Not lots, and they aren't some of *Us.*

G.—And then there are one's affairs at Home to be considered—my place and the rents, and all that. I don't suppose my father can last much longer, and that means the title, and so on.

M.—'Fraid you won't be entered in the Stud Book correctly unless you go Home? Take six months, then, and come out in October. If I could slay off a brother or two, I s'pose I should be a Marquis of sorts. Any fool can be that; but it needs *men,* Gaddy—men like you—to lead flanking squadrons properly. Don't you delude yourself into the belief that your going Home to take your place and prance about among pink-

nosed Cabuli dowagers. You aren't built that way. I know better.

G.—A man has a right to live his life as happily as he can. *You* aren't married.

M.—No—praise be to Providence and the one or two women who have had the good sense to *jawab* me.

G.—Then you don't know what it is to go into your own room and see your wife's head on the pillow, and when everything else is safe and the house *bunded* up for the night, to wonder whether the roof-beams won't give and kill her.

M.—*(Aside.)* Revelations first and second! *(Aloud.)* So-o! I knew a man who got squiffy at our Mess once and confided to me that he never helped his wife on to her horse without praying that she'd break her neck before she came back. All husbands aren't alike, you see.

G.—What on earth has that to do with my case? The man must ha' been mad, or his wife as bad as they make 'em.

M.—*(Aside.)* 'No fault of yours if either weren't all you say. You've forgotten the time when you were insane about the Herriott woman. You always were a good hand at forgetting. *(Aloud.)* Not more mad than men who go to the other extreme. Be reasonable, Gaddy. Your roof-beams are sound enough.

G.—That was only a way of speaking. I've been uneasy and worried about the Wife ever since that awful business three years ago—when—I nearly lost her. Can you wonder?

M.—Oh, a shell never falls twice in the same place.

You've paid your toll to misfortune—why should your Wife be picked out more than anybody else's.

G.—I can *talk* just as reasonably as you can, but you don't understand—you don't understand. And then there's The *Butcha*. Deuce knows where the Ayah takes him to sit in the evening! He has a bit of a cough. Haven't you noticed it?

M.—Bosh! The Brigadier's jumping out of his skin with pure condition. He's got a muzzle like a rose-leaf and the chest of a two-year-old. What's demoralized you?

G.—Funk. That's the long and the short of it. Funk!

M.—But what *is* there to funk?

G.—Everything. It's ghastly.

M.—Ah! I see.

> "You don't want to fight,
> And by Jingo when we do,
> You've got the kid, you've got the Wife,
> You've got the money, too."

That's about the case, eh?

G.—I suppose that's it. But it's not for myself. It's because of *them*. At least, I think it is.

M.—Are you sure? Looking at the matter in a cold-blooded light, the Wife is provided for even if you were wiped out to-night. She has an ancestral home to go to, money, and the Brigadier to carry on the illustrious name.

G.—Then it is for myself or because they are part of me. You don't see it. My life's so good, so pleasant,

as it is, that I want to make it quite safe. Can't you understand?

M.—Perfectly. "Shelter-pit for the Orf'cer's charger," as they say in the Line.

G.—And I have everything to my hand to make it so. I'm sick of the strain and the worry for their sakes out here; and there isn't a single real difficulty to prevent my dropping it altogether. It'll only cost me . . . Jack, I hope you'll never know the shame that I've been going through for the past six months.

M.—Hold on there! I don't wish to be told. Every man has his moods and tenses sometimes.

G.—*(Laughing bitterly.)* Has he? What do you call craning over to see where the near fore lands?

M.—In my case it means that I have been on the Considerable Bend, and have come to parade with a Head and a Hand. It passes in three strides.

G.—*(Lowering voice.)* It *never* passes with me, Jack. I'm always thinking about it. Phil Gadsby funking a fall on parade! Sweet picture, isn't it! Draw it for me.

M.—*(Gravely.)* Heaven forbid! A man like you can't be as bad as that. A fall is no nice thing, but one never gives it a thought.

G.—Doesn't one? Wait till you've got a wife and a youngster of your own, and then you'll know how the roar of the squadron behind you turns you cold all up the back.

M.—*(Aside.)* And this man led at Amdheran after Bagal Deasin went under, and we were all mixed up together, and he came out of the show dripping like

a butcher! *(Aloud.)* Skittles! The men can always open out, and you can always pick your way more or less. *We* haven't the dust to bother us, as the men have, and whoever heard of a horse stepping on a man?

G.—Never—as long as he can see. But did they open out for poor Errington?

M.—Oh, this is childish!

G.—I know it is, and worse than that. I don't care. You've ridden Van Loo. Is he the sort of brute to pick his way—'specially when we're coming up in column of troop with any pace on?

M.—Once in a blue Moon do we gallop in column of troop, and then only to save time. Aren't three lengths enough for you?

G.—Yes—quite enough. They just allow for the full development of the smash. I'm talking like a cur, I know: but I tell you that, for the past three months, I've felt every hoof of the squadron in the small of my back every time that I've led.

M.—But, Gaddy, this is awful!

G.—Isn't it lovely? Isn't it royal? A Captain of the Pink Hussars watering up his charger before parade like the blasted boozing Colonel of a Black Regiment!

M.—You never did!

G.—Once only. He squelched like a *mussuck*, and the Troop-Sergeant-Major cocked his eye at me. You know old Haffy's eye. I was afraid to do it again.

M.—I should think so. That was the best way to rupture old Van Loo's tummy, and make him crumple you up. You *knew* that.

G.—I didn't care. It took the edge off him.

M.—"Took the edge off him!" Gaddy, you—you—you *mustn't,* you know! Think of the men.

G.—That's another thing I am afraid of. D'you s'pose they know?

M.—Let's hope not; but they're deadly quick to spot skrim—little things of that kind. See here, old man, send the Wife Home for the hot weather and come to Kashmir with me. We'll start a boat on the Dal or cross the Rhotang—ibex or idleness—which you please. Only *come!* You're a bit off your oats and you're talking nonsense. Look at the Colonel—swag-bellied rascal that he is. He has a wife and no end of a bow-window of his own. Can any one of us ride round him—chalkstones and all? I can't, and I think I can shove a crock along a bit.

G.—Some men are different. I haven't the nerve. Lord help me, I haven't the nerve! I've taken up a hole and a half to get my knees well under the wallets. I can't help it. I'm so afraid of anything happening to me. On my soul, I ought to be broke in front of the squadron, for cowardice.

M.—Ugly word, that. I should never have the courage to own up.

G.—I meant to lie about my reasons when I began, but—I've got out of the habit of lying to you, old man. Jack, you won't? . . . But I know you won't.

M.—Of course not. *(Half aloud.)* The Pinks are paying dearly for their Pride.

G.—Eh! Wha-at?

M.—Don't you know? We've called Mrs. Gadsby

the Pride of the Pink Hussars ever since she came to us.

G.—'Tisn't *her* fault. Don't think that. It's all mine.

M.—What does she say?

G.—I haven't exactly put it before her. She's the best little woman in the world, Jack, and all that . . . but she wouldn't counsel a man to stick to his calling if it came between him and her. At least, I think—

M.—Never mind. Don't tell her what you told me. Go on the Peerage and Landed-Gentry tack.

G.—She'd see through it. She's five times cleverer than I am.

M.—*(Aside.)* Then she'll accept the sacrifice and think a little bit worse of him for the rest of her days.

G.—*(Absently.)* I say, do you despise me?

M.—'Queer way of putting it. Have you ever been asked that question? Think a minute. What answer used you to give?

G.—So bad as *that?* I'm not entitled to expect anything more; but it's a bit hard when one's best friend turns round and—

M.—So *I* have found. But you will have consolations—Bailiffs and Drains and Liquid Manure and the Primrose League, and, perhaps, if you're lucky, the Colonelcy of a Yeomanry Cav-al-ry Regiment—all uniform and no riding, I believe. How old are you?

G.—Thirty-three. I know it's . . .

M.—At forty you'll be a fool of a J. P. landlord. At fifty you'll own a bath chair, and The Brigadier, if he takes after you, will be fluttering the dove-cotes

of—what's the particular dunghill you're going to? Also, Mrs. Gadsby will be fat.

G.—*(Limply.)* This is rather more than a joke.

M.—D'you think so? Isn't cutting the Service a joke? It generally takes a man fifty years to arrive at it. You're quite right, though. It is more than a joke. You've managed it in thirty-three.

G.—Don't make me feel worse than I do. Will it satisfy you if I own that I am a shirker, a skrimshanker, and a coward?

M.—It will *not*, because I'm the only man in the world who can talk to you like this without being knocked down. You mustn't take all that I've said to heart in this way. I only spoke—a lot of it at least—out of pure selfishness because, because—Oh, damn it all, old man—I don't know *what* I shall do without you. Of course, you've got the money and the place and all that—and there are two very good reasons why you should take care of yourself.

G.—Doesn't make it any the sweeter. I'm backing out—I know I am. I always had a soft drop in me somewhere—and I daren't risk any danger to *them*.

M.—Why in the world should you? You're bound to think of your family—bound to think. Er-hmm. If I wasn't a younger son I'd go too—be shot if I wouldn't!

G.—Thank you, Jack. It's a kind lie, but it's the blackest you've told for some time. I know what I'm doing, and I'm going into it with my eyes open. Old man, I *can't* help it. What would you do if you were in my place?

M.—*(Aside.)* 'Couldn't conceive any woman getting permanently between me and the Regiment. *(Aloud.)* 'Can't say. 'Very likely I should do no better. I'm sorry for you—awf'ly sorry—but "if them's your sentiments" I believe, I really do, that you are acting wisely.

G.—Do you? I hope you do. *(In a whisper.)* Jack, be very sure of yourself before you marry. I'm an ungrateful ruffian to say this, but marriage—even as good a marriage as mine has been—hampers a man's work, it cripples his sword-arm, and oh, it plays Hell with his notions of duty! Sometimes—good and sweet as she is—sometimes I could wish that I had kept my freedom. . . . No, I don't mean that exactly.

MRS. G.—*(Coming down veranda.)* What are you wagging your head over, Pip?

M.—*(Turning quickly.)* Me, as usual. The old sermon. Your husband is recommending me to get married. 'Never saw such a one-idead man!

MRS. G.—Well, why don't you? I dare say you would make some woman very happy.

G.—There's the Law and the Prophets, Jack. Never mind the Regiment. Make a woman happy. *(Aside.)* O Lord!

M.—We'll see. I must be off to make a Troop Cook desperately unhappy. I won't have the wily Hussar fed on G. B. T. shinbones. . . . *(Hastily.)* Surely black ants can't be good for The Brigadier. He's picking 'em off the *chitai* and eating 'em. Here, Señor Comandante Don Grubbynose, come and talk to me. *(Lifts* G. JUNIOR *in his arms.)* 'Want my watch?

You won't be able to put it into your mouth, but you can try. *(G. JUNIOR drops watch, breaking dial and hands.)*

MRS. G.—Oh, Captain Mafflin, I *am* so sorry! Jack, you bad, bad little villain. Ahhh!

M.—It's not the least consequence, I assure you. He'd treat the world in the same way if he could get it into his hands. Everything's made to be played with and broken, isn't it, young 'un? *(Tenderly.)* "Oh, Diamond, Diamond, thou little knowest the mischief that thou hast done."

. . . . . .

MRS. G.—Mafflin didn't at all like his watch being broken, though he was too polite to say so. It was entirely his fault for giving it to the child. Dem little puds are werry, werry feeble, aren't dey, my Jack-in-the-box? *(To G.)* What did he want to see you for?

G.—Regimental shop o' sorts.

MRS. G.—The Regiment! *Always* the Regiment. On my word, I sometimes feel jealous of Mafflin.

G.—*(Wearily.)* Poor old Jack! I don't think you need. Isn't it time for The *Butcha* to have his nap? Bring a chair out here, dear. I've got something to talk over with you.

AND THIS IS THE END OF THE STORY OF THE GADSBYS.

L'ENVOI.

WHAT is the moral? Who rides may read.
  When the night is thick and the tracks are blind
A friend at a pinch is a friend indeed;
  But a fool to wait for the laggard behind;
Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

White hands cling to the tightened rein,
  Slipping the spur from the booted heel,
Tenderest voices cry, "Turn again,"
  Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel,
High hopes faint on a warm hearthstone—
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

One may fall but he falls by himself—
  Falls by himself with himself to blame;
One may attain and to him is the pelf,
  Loot of the city in Gold or Fame:
Plunder of earth shall be all his own
Who travels the fastest and travels alone.

Wherefore the more ye be holpen and stayed—
  Stayed by a friend in the hour of toil,
Sing the heretical song I have made—
  His be the labor and yours be the spoil.
Win by his aid and the aid disown—
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

THE END.

* P4-ANL-677 *